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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER Sunday
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Skip front page, Bunye tells newspaper readers

By Julie Lilingayantana

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Garcia took ₱44M to US

Wife, 2 sons helped move money, say documents

By Fe Zamora and Philip C. Tubeza

AT LEAST ₱700,420,000 or P43,991,280 million—was transferred to the United States by Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia and his family in the past 11 years, according to documents from an investigation conducted by the Ombudsman.

Citing US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) records, the Ombudsman report said the money was moved by Garcia, his wife Cleofas and two of their sons, Ian Carl and Juan Paolo, during six trips to the United States between 1995 and 2004.

The last transaction, involving $500,000, was brought from the Philippines and deposited in the Citibank branch at 666 Fifth Avenue, New York, on June 15, 2004, the report said.

The documents also showed that:

✦ A day earlier, on Jan. 14, Cleofas Garcia arrived in San Francisco and declared to the US Customs and Border Patrol that she had $284,320 in her possession.

✦ On May 18, 2001, she declared she was carrying $68,000.

✦ On Dec. 17, 2003, she declared that she was carrying $100,000.

✦ Two days later, on Dec. 19, Ian Carl and Juan Paolo Garcia were held by Customs and Border Patrol after they failed to declare that they were traveling with

PUT ON A HAPPY FACE

The Masskara Festival was first staged in Bacolod in the "City of Smiles" and played out on the world tour in snap of festivals. The dress day limited honoring greeting masked dancers in the streets began when Negros Occidental's sugar industry began to bottom out in the 1980s but the province refused to be dragged down. Instead, it adopted a smiling paper mache mask as a symbol of its resilience and courage to prevail. On its first day Friday, high schools competed for best in dance, costume and mask awards.

Too old to reenact return of MacArthur

Rites for veterans' valor mark 60th year of Leyte landing

By TJ Burgonio

THEY WERE not much more than boys, then.

Now, mostly in their 80s, they will return to the same beaches on Leyte island that they stormed 60 years ago to begin the US-led Allied liberation of the Philippines.

Four hours after the assault began on the morning of Oct. 20, 1944, Gen. Douglas MacArthur waded ashore to fulfill his promise: "I have returned," he declared. "By the grace of Almighty God, our forces stand again on Philippine soil."

Some of the 200,000 troops MacArthur commanded in that invasion will make a nostalgic journey back to Leyte on Wednesday to commemorate the Allied landings that led to the ousting of the country from Japanese control.

"We wanted to have the veterans participate in the reenactment, but taking into consideration their age, physical limitations, it will be very difficult for them to get off the barge, land and wade to the shore," said Filipino Affairs director Adelio Angeles Cruz, a member of the ad hoc committee in charge of preparations for the celebration.

To the originally planned two-kilometer, the veterans would come in on a barge and then wade ashore.

Instead, they will be standing on the sidelines and be regaled by a tableau or a stage presentation by local talents reenacting the dramatic events of the war, from the historic 1944 landings to the country's liberation the following year.

MacArthur's landing on Leyte, together with then Vice Philippine President Sergio Osmeña, are the stage for the Battle of Leyte Gulf, described by historians as the largest sea battle recorded in history, at least up to that time.

The war upon the battle, which involved hundreds of warships, saw the Japanese lose its aspirations for the first time of the landmass outside the numbers, historians said.

The tableau will focus on the gallantry of the soldiers and the guerrillas who relentlessly fought the Japanese Imperial Army.

"We will focus on the Filipino

GIs probed for refusing 'suicide missions' in Iraq

WASHINGTON—The US Army is investigating 19 members of a supply platoon serving in Iraq who refused orders to go on a food convoy earlier this week, when explosive devices had killed dozens of soldiers, defense officials said on Friday.

Several soldiers called it a "suicide mission," relatives said.

The Clinton Ledger, a newspaper in Jackson, Mississippi, quoted relatives of the soldiers as saying they had been arrested for refusing a "suicide" fuel delivery mission, were read their rights and were moved from a military barracks into tents.

However, the army said the soldiers had neither been arrested nor detained.

It was unclear if this was the first time a sizable group of soldiers in Iraq had refused to carry out orders, and the military is playing down the matter as an isolated incident. But the small rebellion suggested that problems lingered with outfitting soldiers with adequate equipment in an increasingly dangerous country.

A statement issued by the 3D military in Iraq called it an "isolated incident" that only members of some of the troops told a 3D

In dark world of blind kids, seeing is believing

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

IT TAKES roughly two hours for this six-year-old child and his mother to get in his school in Cubao, Quezon City, from their modest home in Sta. Rosa, Laguna.

But it is always a trip worth taking. Jhun Miguel Mauricio, who is blind, is learning his alphabet, reading a few words, making many friends, and gaining confidence that he would get a car large degree someday.

It was not so long ago that Jhun's parents felt that the world was crashing around them.

The second of three children, Jhun was born prematurely. Doctors managed to keep him alive, but overexposure to oxygen damaged his retina, leaving him completely blind at the age of three months.

The ultimate insult was to close an eye to care for their handicapped child—until Jhun's doctor at St. Luke's Hospital handed his mother Evelyn the phone number of Resources for the Blind Inc. (RBI).

It turned out to be a ray of hope.

Jhun is one of over 200 students who are learning to cope in the sightless world at RBI campuses in Quezon City and Cebu City.

He and 16 others from RBI-Cebu Kindergarten I and II visited the Inquirer office on Friday, his birthday. They sang many songs and showed off their remarkable ear to celebrate World Sight Day and mark the launch of the new phase of Standard Chartered Bank's "Seeing is Believing" campaign.

The global program is aimed at controlling sight in new billion people in countries around the world, including the Philippines, where an estimated 100 children lose their sight every week because of poor nutrition, measles and premature birth.

"We have very conservative sleep targets but

ABILITY OVER DISABILITY: Jhun Miguel Mauricio, 6, learns to cope in a sighted world.

SONGS and dances in the Inquirer newsroom on Friday by 17 students of the Resources for the Blind Inc. in Quezon City marked World Sight Day and the launch of Standard Chartered Bank's campaign to restore sight to a million people around the world.

A3
WEATHER FORECAST

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2004

Second FRONTPAGE

7 Boy Scouts drown during jamboree

ILOILO CITY—Tragedy struck the last day of a Boy Scout jamboree yesterday when seven boys, aged 13 or 17, drowned while swimming in the beach in San Joaquin town, 53 km south of this city.

A report from the regional police office here identified the victims as 14-year-olds Rodelyn Barcelon, Arvil Sonic, Jerge Ardino Jr. and Hyde Sidney Mateo, and 17-year-old Alberto Caronda. All five boys were students of Iloilo High School in San Joaquin and residents of the town.

The two other victims, members of Cabatuan town in Iloilo, were identified as John Francis Manzon, 12, a student at Notre Caridem Elementary School, and Christian Elemarco, 11, a student at Dionisio Luna Elementary School.

The seven died on the way to Ilo Gamboa District Hospital where they were rushed.

At least three other boys who were part of the group that went swimming survived.

The boys were among some 4,000 scouts attending a provincial jamboree in San Joaquin, said police chief Carnige Miñez.

At a report in last-listed police headquarters in Manila, Alfaz said the victims, along with seven others of the scouts and two scoutmasters, apparently ignored warnings by locals not to swim in the area, some 40 meters from the shore, because of treacherous underwater currents.

The San Joaquin police chief, SPO4 Roman Villaro, said the victims were swimming at about 8:30 a.m. when they were swept away by strong currents. The lifeguards of Southern Iloilo's beaches are known to be very strong.

Dominick Santillan, 15, one of those who survived, said in a radio interview that the boys were suddenly swept away by strong waves. He said he saw five of his companions crying for help but they were too far away from him.

A statement by the Iloilo council of the BSP said the victims were among a group of scouts from San Joaquin and Cabatuan who asked for permission to take a swim before joining the jamboree activities in the San Joaquin Sports Stadium.

They were accompanied by Dr. Ed Cruz, a teacher at Iloilo Elementary School in Cabatuan, and Domingo Tiburcio, a scoutmaster from Leodegario's National High School.

At about 9 a.m., Cruz called for help as he noticed eight of the boys thrashing about in the water. Shoal Jaro, chair of the BSP Iloilo council, said the national BSP council would give P12,000 for each of the victims while the local council would give P5,000.

San Joaquin Mayor Niña Jaro said she will also be giving financial assistance to the victims' families. Garin also called for an investigation into the possible liability of the organizers.

The jamboree, which began on Oct. 13 and ended yesterday, drew some 4,000 participants from the Western Visayas region. The largest number of participants came from Iloilo. Source: *The Inquirer*, PDI Visayas Bureau, and AP

Solons push own reform agenda

By Michael Lim Ubac

A SEBASTIAN group of senators is promoting a legislative reform program, called the People's Agenda, that would purportedly overhaul politics for the better in the country.

The proposed agenda, to be finalized during a seminar workshop on Oct. 23 to 25, will address the two most pressing issues facing the administration—the Armed Forces scandal and the Comelec.

Opposition Sen. Edgardo Angara said the reform agenda would include programs that would "raise the political capacity of the Philippines and increase the credibility of the government and the efficiency of the civil service."

A special committee composed of Angara and Senators Francis Pangilinan, Aquilino Pimentel Jr. and Richard Gordon has come up with a blueprint for the proposed structural changes in government.

The special committee's proposed draft said "the problem itself may reside either in structure, procedure or functioning," which would mean the changes may be carried out either through legislation or executive action.

The proposed work programs cover such areas as finance and taxation, social welfare, jobs and wealth creation, peace and order, and good governance.

The special committee suggested these topics as the initial batch of reforms in a People's Agenda that the Senate would push for the duration of the 13th Congress.

To fix the economy, senators want to address the tax revenue efforts which had declined from a historic high of 16.29 percent of gross domestic product from 1996 to 1997 to only 13.46 percent from 1998 to 2003 by including up capital markets, establishing a credit-rating system and cleaning up the banking sector's nonperforming assets, among others.

As for jobs and wealth creation, the senators are for promoting projects in agriculture, rural infrastructure and agro-industry because they generate the quickest results in the least cost.

The draft also calls for agricultural modernization through soil tillage, averting the raising industry-initiated value of farmers' $800 billion and $1 trillion), nationwide reformation, setting up of export creation ventures, modernizing the civil service and strengthening political parties.

To improve peace and order, the draft calls for an "honorable peace" accord with the separatist Moro Islamic Liberation Front, "cleanse" in the Sama, Abu and Moroto cases, and for government not address what it said were the root causes of the communist insurgency—mass poverty, lack of opportunity and inequalities in the social system.

The Senate would be asked to set a strict schedule for enacting every reform and committee is mandated to ensure that the agenda is carried out.

"The fiscal and financial reforms should obviously have the highest priority. Slow progress on these areas by the Congress would deny and will lower on our country's already poor credit rating in global finance markets," the draft read.

Aglipay urged to start lifestyle check in PNP

By Carlito Pablo

DON'T wait for what happened at Camp Aguinaldo to happen to Camp Crame, Rizal leaders told Philippine National Police Director-General Edgar Aglipay, whom they urged to start a lifestyle check program in the PNP.

House Majority Leader Rep. Prospero Nograles led other legislators in urging Aglipay to start probing the police force as it emerged that the Armed Forces had been caught flatfooted by the explosive revelations concerning corruption among a number of its generals.

Even as controversy roiled the AFP—triggered by the discovery of the unexplained wealth of former AFP comptroller Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia—restless unnamed officers in the PNP had suggested that police generals were also involved in corruption, Nograles said.

Despite their modest incomes, some police officials have been able to live in style, building lavish houses and buying luxury vehicles, he pointed out.

The senior ranks of the PNP have been rocked by a number of scandals, including the illegal detention of Filipino-Chinese businessman Jose Dy III and the kidnapping of Japanese businessman Yuji Noguchi.

Nograles said the PNP leadership should not allow politics to be allowed to also spread to the police institution by allowing an objective lifestyle check on its officers," Nograles said in a statement.

"People have become skeptical about the outcome of the military probe on suspended Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia," he said.

In the same statement, Rep. Eileen Ermita-Buhain said that Aglipay has only a few months in office and must "not feel and do his best to cleanse the PNP of dishonest officers who have enriched themselves at the expense of the people."

Up close of the committee on basic services, said that an anti-corruption campaign in the PNP will be a major contribution to the government's commitment to good governance.

Buhain said Senate Pres. Franklin Drilon, Lakas-Kampi Rep. Ronaldo Zamora, Lakas-Kampi Rep. Ronaldo Cruz and Aglipay would be moving to outright deny that there was corruption at Camp Crame.

"The independent lifestyle checks and investigations of errant police officers will demonstrate the PNP's leadership's seriousness and resolve in instituting needed reforms in the organization," said Pacificville, chair of the committee on transportation and communications.

Nograles noted that there had been reports (last) as to the AFP corruption—the coming of funds intended for supplies and projects into cash—was also being practiced in the PNP.

'Prayerful' Erap finds God's purpose in jail

By Armand N. Nocum

THE INTERVIEWER, a precocious sixth-grader, confessed it an "answered prayer."

The interviewee, former President Joseph Estrada, did not disappoint. The disgraced leader, ostensibly in jail at his lavish mansion estate in Tanay, Rizal, was obliging with quote-worthy testimonies and advice.

During the interview that started at 10 a.m. and lasted until after lunch yesterday, Estrada told Kimchie Rose D. Pino-Eng, a sixth-grade student at the Brokenshire Gospel Christian Academy in Fort Bonifacio, that he now realized that God had a purpose for putting him in jail.

"God brought me here to be closer to Him and to be more prayerful. I now pray—six hours a day—where I [used to] do it for just five minutes when I was President," said Estrada, who had twice been likened to be deeply religious.

He fancies aide who was on the interview said this was how Estrada answered a question from Brenton on whether he prayed to God and how often.

Besides had written Justice Edilberto Sandoval, chair of the Sandiganbayan Special Division trying Estrada for plunder, last September asking for a transfer of detention to Camp Crame.

She said the interviews was for a school report. The request, curiously prayed for, was granted.

Valve their talk, the President (Estrada) turned to us, saying he believed that his prayers of getting vindicated and of being free will be granted one day" the aide said.

Asked whether he enjoyed his short-lived stay in jail, Estrada reportedly replied that he did and that he was thankful to God and the people for having made him President.

But he said he was also sad that he was ousted in 2001 before he was able to do everything that he had wanted to do for the people.

Asked what he missed most while making decisions when he was President, Estrada replied: "I decided for the greater good of the greatest number of people, not for my selfish end or that of my compadres."

Kimchie was accompanied by her mother Rhoda Lee Jose-Pino Estrada, cousin Black Nazareno and teacher Maytinet Pajes.

She gave Estrada a Bible and a book titled "The Purpose-Driven Life."

Estrada, who is now said to be enjoying farming, brought Her Eng to a vegetable farm owned by a detainee who tended to some vegetables, including okra and patola. She was given some of the vegetables to take home.

Vegetables from the farm also was the fare at Estrada by a most made lapsis. The children were allowed to feed the fish in the lagoon.

Estrada's detention facility is "basically still the government," Estrada assured her to study hard, saying that it was the best gift that she could get from her parents.

"My parents would tell me that always," said Estrada, who is a college dropout.

Sin stable, receives visitors

AL DIG arrived Manila Archbishop Jaime Cardinal Sin appeared to be in stable condition yesterday morning as he received several relatives, including President Macapagal-Arroyo.

In addition to the President, Sin also talked briefly with Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Rosales, who paid his second visit.

"They (Mr. Arroyo and Mrs.) talked for a while. She assured him of continued prayers for his health," Peachy Bernardo, director of the archdiocese of Manila's communication office, said.

Bernardo said the information about the visits was relayed to her by Fr. Rufino Sescon, Sin's secretary, and Roman Bishop Ivo Villegas, a protégé of the cardinal's.

Visitors have not been allowed to see Sin although several groups had gone to the hospital to pray for him.

Sin, 76, has been confined at the intensive care unit of the Cardinal Santos Memorial Medical Center since Monday after suffering a heart attack, his second.

Doctors were quoted as saying that he suffered from hypotension and subsequent congestive heart failure.

Yesterday Sescon said reports indicated that Sin was in stable condition.

"The cardinal has even begun joking. Bishop Ivo said the cardinal told his attending doctor that he'll find her a boyfriend and marry them," she said. Marlen P. Maylo

Deport Taulava, 5 others–DOJ

By Philip C. Tubeza

THE DEPARTMENT of Justice has concluded that six of the eight naturalized Filipinos, including Talk 'N Text's Asi Taulava, killed their citizenship papers in his ability to play in the Philippine Basketball Association and should be deported.

A top-ranking DOJ official told the Inquirer yesterday that only Andy Seigle of Barangay Ginebra and Jun Miguel Beer's Jayson Peña were able to prove their Filipino citizenship.

The source said that the DOJ would issue tomorrow its 50-page ruling recommending the deportation of Taulava, Red Bull's Dawson Hare, Joe Ordonez and Mick Pennisi, Shaft Hatfield of Coca-Cola, and Alex Cabagnot of Barangay Ginebra.

DOJ Secretary Raul Gonzalez later confirmed the news in a TV interview.

"Definitely, their documents were not authentic. If lost, they were misrepresented or falsified. Those players will be deported or they might choose to leave voluntarily," the official said.

"Only the validity of Seigle and Peña's Filipino citizenship were upheld," he added.

The official said the DOJ concluded that Seigle is a Filipino after he was able to prove that his mother was a Filipina citizen and that Seigle's only fault was that he was not able to elect Filipino citizenship within three years after he reached the age of majority.

"But we hope to be liberal on this. We think the (overnight) was made in good

TAULAVA

HATFIELD

Decision may affect SMB-Coke tiff today

By Jane Manaloy

SAN MIGUEL Beer and Coca-Cola clash today on the eve of a decision from the Department of Justice recommending that six of the eight PBA foreign players in the Great Matador PBA Philippine Cup be deported for faking their citizenship papers.

The SMB-Coke game at 4 p.m. at the Araneta Coliseum will somehow be affected since the DOJ ruling clears Sweetlines Inc. (Swi) Peña but penalizes Coca-Cola's Andy Seigle. (See related story above.)

Also getting the ax with Hatfield are the Tanduay of Talk 'N Text, Red Bull's Dawson Hare, Mick Pennisi and Joe Ordonez and Alex Cabagnot of Barangay Ginebra.

Peña and Andy Seigle of Ginebra won't be deported, according to the DOJ, because they were able to prove their Filipino citizenship.

Based on an earlier board decision, the six players are automatically suspended as soon as the DOJ receives the official ROA ruling this coming week.

With the favorable ruling, Peña is expected to play improved ball in partnership with Danny Espinosa and Nic Belmonte of the SBC.

The Tigers will try to snap three through Bal Reavis and Gilbert Lee although the two 6-foot-7 cousins will get help from Hatfield and Mark Jones.

Also equally interesting is the matchup between Johnny Abarrientos and Glenn Rucela at the point.

Gary David and Hatfield started during the Tigers' 71-68 conquest of the Aces in Batangas City while the Boo-ners got another fabulous act from Wynn Gabat in scoring past the Barangay Ginebra Kings, 83-72, early this week.

The Aces are saying to bounce back after stumbling back-to-back beat-breakers. The Kings are also determined to return to the victory trail after getting sidetracked by TNT last Wednesday.

What's Inside

Author of error-filled textbook sues whistle-blower for libel

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

PERHAPS it's just an...

While the publish...ers, authors and evalu...ators of an error-fil...ridden textbook [illegible] history textbook could go scot-free, destitute [illegible] the schools Alunan could face prosecu...tion.

Antonio Calipjo Go, academic supervisor of Alunan School, was sued for libel by the lead author of the second-year high school history text that he said contained 453 errors.

Dr. Rodolfo Vera, 71, a former Department of Education consultant, filed a libel complaint even as the DepEd confirmed that her "Saya, Yesa, Sipnayan sa Ating Lahing," published by JD Publications, did contain errors.

The DepEd has ordered University of the Philippines history teachers to check her other book, "Kasaysayan ng Lungsod" for third-year high school students, which Go claimed had more than 300 errors.

Go received a subpoena from the Quezon City Prosecutor's Office on Friday ordering him to appear in court on Oct. 28. He did not get a copy of Vera's complaint.

At first, Go found the situation humorous.

"I'm the one who has grounds to sue for libel. But I won't do that out of respect for her (Vera's) age," he said. "I'm not worried. All I have to do is bring the book."

In an open letter to the magazine published Sept. 20, Vera and her co-author Emilia Yñiguez and Ruth Fuentes (the fourth author, Remelita Quiroz, had passed away) said Go had [illegible] the errors.

One less fee for OFWs

THE DEPARTMENT of Labor and Employment yesterday announced that a special hiring arrangement had been forged with Taiwan.

In a statement, Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas said the agreement would do away with placement fees for overseas Filipino workers wanting to work in Taiwan.

The agreement was part of a special hiring opportunity window opened by Taiwan for some 14,000 foreign workers, especially those from the Philippines and other Asian countries.

It was forged during Sto. Tomas' recent visit to Taiwan where she also discussed the need to protect Filipino workers from abusive employers.

"We hope the special hiring arrangement of the Philippines with Taiwan... will be emulated and will set a pattern for better OFW protection worldwide, especially among migrant-receiving countries in collaboration with the Philippines," she said.

Some 45,386 Filipinos went to Taiwan last year to work and another 23,000 were hired or re-hired between January and June this year. Marlon P. Ramos

CHESS OLYMPIAD

Team RP routs Malta

MALLORCA, Spain—Grandmaster-elect Mactar Mark Paragua needed only 19 moves to dispatch his opponent and trigger the Philippines' 4-0 rout of Malta in the opening round of the 36th Chess Olympiad.

GM Joey Antonio, playing the top board in lieu of fellow GM Eugene Torre, also prevailed as did Olympiad rookies IM Jayson Gonzales and NM Darwin Lopito.

Paragua, who will be conferred the GM title in the World Chess Congress late this month, displayed of Bird's Opening with the white pieces, one of the quirkiest moves for the chess.

"He made a mistake in the opening," said the 22-year-old former chess prodigy who is coming off two major victories in Alaska, Ilocos.

Lydia, the reigning national champion, followed Paragua off the playing hall after defeating Dennis Mella in 30 moves with the white pieces.

Handling black, Antonio and Gonzales took a little longer before winning their games.

In eight-time Olympian, Antonio displayed his mastery of the endgame against Carlo Mico whom he beat after 48 moves of a Caro-Kann while Gonzales forced Andrew Borg to lose by time before after 42 moves.

Twenty-seven other nations advanced maximum rounds in the first round pits teams from the opposite ends of the bracket.

Second seed Ukraine flame-hot lightweight Vassily Ivanchuk and Russia's Peter Svidler to demolish Bolivia, 4-0, while third ranked Israel shut out South Africa.

Singapore, Bangladesh and Iran are among the Asian countries who can surpass their numbers.

China, the Philippines' main rival in Asia, beat Paraguay, 3-1.

There were few surprises.

Lonely Iraq pulled off a 2-all draw with Croatia while India and England posted hard-fought 2.5-1.5 wins over Uruguay and Turkey, respectively.

Host Colonial Antony Fabbri of team-secretary and high-scorer for the Philippines' only women.

Torre and International Senator, who did not see action, would again watch the games from the gallery following the team consensus to field the same lineup against Colombia Saturday.

The last time both teams met in a Olympiad two years ago, the match ended in a 2-2 draw.

The Philippines was not as successful in the women's section, losing to Cuba, 0.5-3.5.

Rookie Lovedyl Catacutan failed to capitalize on her middlegame advantage and lost to Women International Master Yanire Martinez after 53 moves.

WIM Beverly Mendoza also dropped her first match against WGM Pina Infanzon.

Two-time national champion Sherrie Joy Lumbao assumed a shortcut when she held WIM Rhenan Allibon to a draw. With a report from Marlon Ramos in Palma

PARAGUA

A NCAA, High School (right) spiker puts one over a Ateneo Preparatory School defender during the two-set Greenwich Girls Volleyball Invitational Tournament at the Southville International School in Las Piñas City. Ateneo prevailed, 25-16, 25-20, for its first win in two games.

Grace leads by 4; Jenny lies at 15th

PALM DESERT, California—Grace Park fell farther up her 10-under par 62 with a five-under 67 Friday to seize a four-shot lead after two rounds of the $800,000 Samsung World Championship.

The Philippines' Jennifer Rosales shot a 71 and was at 136, plus-4 for third place.

"I had 1 on birdie every hole on this course," Park said. "The way I'm striking balls ... the way I've been putting the last two weeks, as long as I kept giving myself chances, I could shoot another low number."

South Korean's Park had six birdies and a bogey to post a 36-hole total of 15-under 129 and lead 19-others in the elite field.

She won the Kraft Nabisco Championship six months ago and finished second at last week's Asahi Ryokuken International Championship.

England's Karen Stupples and South Korea's Mi Hyun Kim were tied for second at 73 under 133 as Park tied certain another 60 at the Campeon Course in the Bighorn Golf Club.

Stupples, a two-time Tour winner this season at the Welch's Fry's Championship and the Women's British Open, had a bogey-free round Friday. Stupples opened with four birdies and eight birdies in a roller-coaster first round.

Also tied on birdies on the front nine for a 36, but could only add one more birdie on the 18th.

Sweden's Annika Sorenstam, Christie Kerr, Meaghan Francella and Scotland's Catriona Matthew—who was second runner-up Friday's round—all were five shots back at 16-under 138.

Sorenstam rapped the par five seventh, but bogeyed No. 10 for a four-under 68. She is battling for her seventh Tour victory of 2004.

"It seemed I was really not on the right side of the flag today," Sorenstam said. AFP

MASIKIPAG TIRUMPOS: Alexandra Madrigal, 8, of Team Alexandra PCP proved her age as the future bowling superstar when she rolled the Cadet all-time score in the seventh leg of the 2004 PCSO-Quali Kanting on the Kart Track inside the Bowie na Bowie complex.

Pacquiao-Delada tussle shapes up

Salvani L. Lagumbay
Contributor

ALL EXCITING undercard is shaping up in the countryside Dec. 4 event in Taguig featuring fan favorite weight king Manny Pacquiao.

If things go according to plans, Pacquiao's younger brother, Bobby would be debuting his Philippine super featherweight crown against Celso Sagad No. 1 contender Dennis Delada of the Bohol Isabel Bubble in the top supporting bout.

However, Delada needs to handle Ad Carligues first on Oct. 23 in a 10-rounder to earn the right for Randy Nano Bombay Mercury card in Cagayan Lapu-City.

The younger Pacquiao, who is currently training in the Wild Card Gym of world-renowned trainer Freddie Roach, will be definitely eyeing for the same honors Delada, who is trained by Celso trained IBO Pistro at the Bohol Isabel boxing gym.

Sources said the fight contract is ready to be signed by the two boxers.

Pacquiao (29-3-2, 9 KOs) left for the United States last month with his mom Dionisia, brother and Celso pleriam J. Ramos following an important decision victory over Rafe Lorena Jr. in their IBF eliminator.

Delada (8-1, 6 KOs) is coming off a decision win over Ronnie Ramos last April 29. He absolutely offer his shock defeat at the hands of journeyman Nonito Gonzales in April, which decided an earlier plan to get him against Pacquiao.

Boxing at GC Mall

SOME of Cebu's top amateur boxers will see action in a card marking Cebuano Country Mall's 11th anniversary on Tuesday, Oct. 19.

Serving notice to the northern metro-encircled Mr. Carlos and the Bonol brothers, Ilia and Alex Jolos.

The Sweetsdebut Carlos goes up against upcoming Edmar Tamayo, Nicolas Bacud will knock Moises with pro-bound Gregie Balanon while Alex Bonol of Barangay Ermita will tangle with professional boxer Speedy Boy Garso in a special "pro-am" exhibition bout.

The rest of the card pits George Canale of GMC Boxing Club against Roy Magbanua of Liloan, Lapu-Tagbilaran's Benjamin Gonzales vs. UYS Ray Montejo, Hubayanan Mahjohnson against GMC's Brian "Pol" Bacaro, Pinoh's Ayo Boni against GMC's Sherwin Oporto versus Reid Villamor, UYS' Jojo Bayagan Calamcalan, NBI's Daniel Del Castillo. — Sahara Lagumbay

SPORTSWATCH

Fisterra features Lobo-Remolo tiff

SAMSUNG's Fisterra is today featured two action-filled four-round bouts. Jonathan Lobo faces Michael Remolo in the super-flyweight division while Jessie Cinch squares off with Pit Kanayo in the welterweight category. The bouts were held recently at the Laguna Municipal Gym in Nagcarlan, Brgy. Estrella in a joint venture of the United States, Europe, Australia, Japan, the Middle East and other parts of the world through 0921-3289. Pinoy Untitled Pt. 1 the show is aired at 11 p.m., Saturday, and 9PM tonight, same channel. Swimming Elsa Jane Pilapil wins Open 200M Breaststroke and Sandoy Bhern Gail Fraser supported by Samsung Sandoy and Bhern behind at 3 a.m.

VILLAGE HOOPS: adidas Sports Korea (ASK) president Aremis Laurel (left) the commemorative of the PLDT-myDSL Village Hoops at the adidas Sports Ramp basketball court, Bonifacio Global City in Taguig. Also present were deputy commissioner Bong Go and Talk 'N Text guard Willie Miller

San Beda-Alabang, Mirium, RTU cop 2nd

HOST school San Beda College-Alabang, Mirium College and Pilar Technological University salvaged second runner-up honors yesterday in the 2004 Alas open basketball and volleyball tournament at the St. Scholastica's College gym.

The winners take all championship games, meanwhile, begin today, with a possible all-Mirium showdown in the basketball division. Mirium will meet Pilar in the Tournament Pamangan at 11:30 a.m. while taking on defending champion College of St. Benilde in another basketball duel 3:00 p.m. The NBAA-time formed bank tournament is Bank College Antipolo, 25-10, 25-14, 15-25, 25-19, in quarterfinal. RTU bounced out the game night 17, markers of Mariel Abayatbar to overturn Trinity College, 25-19, 25-19, 25-19, in the other quarterfinal piece to secure a berth. Shaya Ballesteros scored 15 points to help Mirium send the host to the losers side of the 40-48 win over DBCA.

Coseteng braces for tough fight

FRONTRUNNING Judy Coseteng of RRR strong Ice Cubes Revolver trio to keep his unbeaten lead against tough rivals Bey Spain and Dominic Bea as the 2004 PCSO Grand Prix enters its penultimate leg this weekend, Oct. 23-24, at the Batangas Racing Circuit.

Coseteng, despite a runner-up with Enzo Recon in the last race, kept his hold of the top in the National Touring Car Championship with 95 points in this event sanctioned by the Automobile Association of the Philippines and supervised by Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office Borough Hon. Rosario Dizon, Philippine Shell Petroleum Corporation, Toyota Motors Philippines, Honda Cars Philippines, Mitsubishi Motors Philippines, Suzuki Philippines, Nissan Motors and MOF Company.

Tad Reyes and Bien both gained grounds to pose as big threats to Coseteng's title defense in this series also supported by Autodeal, Autoland Inc., Maserati Autowerks Motors, MJ 107, Dunkin' Donuts and Alaska.

Reyes, backed up by Tropical Inc and Motorenio Auginer Symonton, entered top second overall just three points behind with 86 while Bien is third with 87 points.

A similar incident or a nearly worse could spell big pressure to Coseteng's bid for the Driver of the Year award in the championship round this December.

Deport Taulava . . .

(From page A1)

batik," the source said.

The official said that Batu was able to prove that one of his parents was also a Filipino and that his roots were from Negros Occidental.

"Which Batuan was established. There are many Batus in Negros" the official said.

The source said the DOJ doubted its favorable findings in the Alabang Regional Trial Court that was supposed to accept a bond for the player's release.

"We cannot allow an injunction to make an alien a Filipino if that happens, then anybody can avail and get an injunction from the courts," the official said.

He said the DOJ has asked Solicitor General Alfredo Benipayo to ask the Manila RTC to lift the injunction.

Meanwhile, PBA chair Buddy Encarnado and commissioner Noli Eala endorsed the decision of the Board of Governors to suspend and abide by the decision of the DOJ on the questioned players.

"In a gaining, regardless of our position, we must recognize the authority of the DOJ. It's already official. There's no other choice but to follow it as agreed upon by the board," said Encarnado.

In an emergency meeting last month, the PBA board agreed to unconditionally suspend the Philippine players who will be recommended by the DOJ for deportation.

"If the players are deported [and banned on the board's ruling], they will be automatically suspended as soon as we get the official communication from the BOI," said Encarnado.

"We want to get the official word first before we can act on anything. But as far as the PBA is concerned, our position is final. We will follow the DOJ decision and implement it," said Eala.

The Senate Committee on Constitutional Amendments and Revision earlier ordered the Bureau of Immigration in August last year to deport Taulava and the others for allegedly taking their citizenship. With a report from Jane Hanson

San Andres shares Supercross spotlight

CALTEX ROVERS standout rider Kenneth San Andres snared a finishing victory in the Rookie Open race during the opening round of the Supercross Championships at the Cuneta track near the Senator Ninoy Aquino Avenue (NAIA) Thursday.

San Andres, who rode Kawasaki Rookie Open motorcycle from the rostered 1-2 punch of the Rovers Motocross Team, posted a full lap victory in the second heat.

"Kenneth has again proved his worth in the Rookie Open competition in which the Rookie of the Year will be chosen," said his father Andres' leader coach, Jun San.

San Andres, who is also supported by ABS Motorcycle Shop, ATM, Century, HJC Helmet, Protocol, Bra, UPC and Rockville Motorcycles, also took part in the more challenging Pro Expert 125, where he placed fourth behind his teammate Aguilar and fellow Caltex Rovers rider Lester Sandag.

In dark world of blind kids, seeing is believing

From page A1

blindness is a global challenge that we can only combat if business and individuals work together," said Standard Chartered CEO Simon Morris.

SBC has been meeting the challenge of helping blind and visually impaired Filipino since 1986.

Personal project

It began as a personal project of Dr. Arthur Lowe, blind since childhood, to produce a braille version of the Filipino Bible.

Lowe came to the Philippines in 1979 to head the Manila branch of the Summer Institute of Linguistics.

Learning of his interest in transcribing the Filipino Bible into braille, three Filipino pastors met with him in 1980 with the intention of helping him's the mission into reality.

The braille system makes use of raised dots, which are recognizable by touch. The tips of the fingers are moved across the dots from left to right, in the same manner that eyes scan a printed page.

The system, created in 1824, has established the blind to read like the sighted.

That first project to produce a 31-spine Bible in braille eventually led to the formal set up of BBI in 1986.

Productive lives

Through the years, BBI has become much more than just a translator of books into braille.

In existence to help blind and visually impaired children live normal, happy and productive lives and reach their full potential.

Children at BBI, usually from poor and lower middle class families, are taught to read in braille and to take care of themselves in preparation for integration into regular high schools.

Over 1,000 have graduated from BBI. Many have found gainful employment, others have set up their own businesses, such as bag-making, rug-making and running mini-sari-sari stores.

Parents are also trained and counseled to help them care for their children better. Children from other schools, on the other hand, are taught skills in special education.

BBI maintains a trained staff of 20 specialists and about three teachers for every class of 15 students. Like many, many of these students, it had their sight because of premature birth.

Other students with multiple disabilities are given extra attention.

Children are provided uniforms, learning materials and even walking sticks...all for free, thanks to donations from corporations, individuals, foundations and corporations such as Standard Chartered Bank.

'Read a Braille'

The bank joined hands with SBC two years ago, and plans to extend the tutorial program with funding the "Read a Braille" program.

The program aims to produce and circulate free braille textbook materials and educational activity sheets to over 200 schools where blind children and young adults are enrolled.

By joining hands with the private sector, BBI is confident that it can turn darkness into light for blind children.

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EMBARRASSED by BAD BREATH?

GIs probed for refusing 'suicide missions' in Iraq

From page A1

newspaper that security for the Haditha mission inadequate.

The military statement said 19 members of the 202nd Quartermaster Company, a unit that transports oil and other supplies for American troops, did not report to formation or prepare for their assigned convoy mission on Wednesday morning.

It said the investigation would determine whether the military's action could constitute mutiny.

Serious military offense

Refusal to obey orders, especially by in a combat zone, is a serious military offense. But the statement stressed that "it is far too early in the investigation to speculate as to what happened, why it happened or any action that might be taken."

The Fort Lee Ledger in Jackson, Mississippi, reported on Friday that interviews with some family members indicated that soldiers from the unit, based in Tallil, refused to go on the mission because they felt they did not have adequate armor and the vehicles were not in good shape.

"Initial indication is that the soldiers scheduled for the mission raised some valid concerns and the command is addressing them," the military statement from Iraq said, adding that some soldiers apparently expressed their concerns "in an inappropriate manner."

Civilians and military convoys in Iraq, where more than 1,000 US troops have been killed since the US-led invasion in March 2003, are frequent targets for roadside bombings and other ambushes.

Questioned

The commanding general of the 13th Corps support command quickly appointed the deputy commander to lead an investigation of the allegations, and troops were questioned at their headquarters in Tallil.

The Clarion-Ledger quoted Teresa Hill of Corinth, Alabama, who said her daughter Amber McCleary was among the soldiers detained as saying, "They knew how angry Sgt. Cory Hall was when they were going to go refueled or fueled."

The article did not say if the unit's trucks could transfer more than 40 miles (64 km) per hour.

Raise hell

"This is a real, real, big emergency," Ms. Cleary said in her message. "I need you to contact someone. I mean, some great hell."

She had broken down trucks, non-armored vehicles and, oh, we were carrying contaminated fuel. They are holding us against our will. We are your prisoners," she said.

Hill said she was later contacted by Sgt. Tommy Turner in Iraq, who was calling from the front line.

"She told me [Sergeant] was being held in a tent with armed guards," said Hill, who spoke with her daughter Friday afternoon after her release. Her daughter said they are being punishment ranging from a reprimand to a charge of mutiny.

Ms. Avery said the convoy successfully completed the fuel delivery a few hours after the platoon members refused to go.

The Army said the unit's commanding officer had ordered a "safety-maintenance stand down" during which the unit's vehicles would be inspected while the inquiry was being conducted.

John Butler of Jackson, Miss., the wife of Staff Sgt. Michael Butler, 44, said she was awakened about 5:30 or 6 a.m. Thursday by a call from an officer in Iraq. She said her "That my husband was being detained for disobeying a direct order," Butler said, "and I want us to tell me that it was a buggy charge that they got against him and some of those soldiers over there, because what they were doing was sending them into a suicide mission and they refused to go."

'Valid concerns'

A senior Army officer in Washington said the 19 soldiers had been assembled on Wednesday morning to deliver fuel but that some refused to go. He denied they had been held under guard.

The officer said the soldiers raised "some valid concerns."

"Unfortunately it appears that a small number of the soldiers involved chose to express their concerns in an inappropriate manner," he said. Similar disciplinary action was in store for a sergeant colonel, and an inquiry is under way the officer said, to determine if the Uniform Code of Military Justice was violated and whether disciplinary measures were warranted.

"I know soldiers are deeply concerned and have been deeply concerned about the equipment shortages," said Paul Rieckhoff, a veteran of the Iraq war and executive director of Operation Truth, a New York advocacy group working to draw attention to the needs of soldiers in Iraq and returning veterans. New York Times News Service, AFP, Reuters, AP

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Skip front page...

From page A1

wrote in his book How from the Future, a weekly recap of Malacañang goings-on.

"Good news in the gold. It is buried deep (inside) and you have to dig for it," Bunye said.

The Malacañang spokesperson could only hope this piece lands in the inside pages.

Since the majority of readers just stick to the front page, they end up reading only the negative stories.

Daily dose of negatives

"If one has a daily dose of negatives, pretty soon one develops a negative outlook not just about the country but ultimately about themselves. Negative thoughts produce negative actions," Bunye said. So front-page news needs positive stories to counterbalance its usually gloomy tone.

Apparently, the headlines last week were not to Malacañang's liking.

Read for yourself: amid economic difficulties, an ever-soaring number of Filipinos are going abroad to work as domestic helpers; ranking the President's appointees, money-losing government corporations continue to pay fat salaries to its top officials; senior military officers have been found guilty of unauthorized wealth.

How this: An American think tank has described Mr Arroyo as the "weakest leader in the region."

Feel-good stories

Bunye said that there were many things the Filipino could be proud of and feel good about. He made a list:

• The Philippines is a major car exporter with Ford Philippines expected to export more than 100,000 units in the near future.

• As a major player in the call center industry, it ranks third in the world after India and China.

• When it comes to information and communications technology (ICT), the Philippines is No. 4 worldwide in terms of competence and skills.

• America Online has 3,000 people in Clark answering 90 percent of AOL's global email inquiries.

• Texas Instruments in Baguio produces chips that run 100 percent of all Nokia cell phones and 40 percent of Ericsson cell phones.

More good news

• Toshiba laptops and Hewlett-Packard cell phones are produced in Laguna.

• The most advanced Pentium 4 chip of Intel is produced in Cavite.

• The Philippines owned its international Container Terminal one area the bid to develop and manage the Subic container port in Holland for $3.88 million.

• While Microsoft's is No. 1 in the United States, Infotec is No. 1 in the Philippines.

• Cebu Pacific is embarking on a trans-Atlantic journey and PAL announces entry into Timor market.

• The country recorded the lowest number of strikes in 12 years.

• In the countryside, marginalized people are becoming empowered. Their needs are being met with Electricity and water are being provided.

Reading the papers is part of Bunye's job description.

As a "spin doctor," Bunye observes that presidential statements reacting on virtually every headline story in every newspaper on a daily basis. On top of that, he faces 9-minutes-long reporters every day to answer their questions on any subject under the sun.

Former reporter

Bunye knows the territory well. He was a former reporter for the defunct Manila Times Radio and Philippine Daily Mail. It was in the latter that he began his career as a newspaper columnist before joining Mr Arroyo as her spokesperson and press secretary.

"If my former media organization closed down, I can assure you, they were purely for reasons beyond [my control] of management and not due to my inability to set the good dot list," he quipped, in a speech at the Conference of the National Press Club recently.

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Pampanga thwarts Ilocos Sur in URBL

SAN FERNANDO, Pampanga—Home team Harbour Centre Pampanga scored a come-from-behind 64-62 victory over the visiting Ilocos Sur Snipers, 64-62, yesterday on family to hold of second place in the Invitational Basketball League (URBL) First Conference at the Ateneo de Cagayan Gym of the University of the Assumption here.

Vi Sunga, who scored nine of his 11 points in the fourth quarter, delivered the crucial baskets in the last two minutes to carve Harbour Centre Pampanga to its third triumph in four outings.

The hosts foe Snipers, in command in the early goings, fell to its third defeat in four games.

Following a 21-all count at the half, coach Mario Quinsaat turned to power forwards Francis Bauzon,Jaypee and Deodon Mendoza for the breakaway while point-guard Mike Manipis sank two triples, the last a 55-foot bazzer-beater that gave the Snipers its biggest lead, 60-56.

But Harbour Centre made sure it wasn't to be denied on its home turf as Billy Bernal and Lib alumni Alex Bugtas, Joe Duong and Vil Ramos provided the relaxation defense.

Bernal scored on his patented one-handed shot in threesure at 61-60, with 1:48 remaining. After trading baskets plays, Bugtas swiped the ball for an unconditional dash to seize the lead, 63-62, with 55 seconds to go.

Sector that smashed the finishing touches by pulled a steal off Manipis and quickly passed the ball to Bugtas, who drew a quick foul and split his free throws for the final count.

The Pampanga Ilocos Sur tussle will be televised over local Pampanga cable channel Infonet 8 from Oct. 20 to 25 at 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Infonet will also televise Harbour Centre's other home games.

Meanwhile, the URBL begins the second half of the elimination phase with a doubleheader today at the Lib campus.

The Quezon City Warriors, riding on the momentum of its inspiring 77-64 win over the Snipers last Monday, takes on the undefeated 3K Lindflor-Cebu City Jewellers in the 2 p.m. encounter.

Harbour Centre opes a repeat over the Lucenzalo-Cebu Provision Profeteers in the main game at 4 p.m.

STANDINGS

	W	L
M. Lhuillier-Cebu City	4	0
Harbour Centre	3	1
Quezon City Warriors	1	3
Ilocos Sur Snipers	1	3
Lucenzalo-Cebu	1	3

GAMES TODAY
(University of the Assumption Gym)

11 a.m. — Quezon City Warriors vs. M. Lhuillier-Cebu City
4 p.m. — Harbour Centre vs. Lucenzalo-Cebu

Rockwell is it

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

Ozamiz tops Tribu Sugbu, nears crown

STA. LUCIA'S Kenneth Duremdes battles for the loose ball against Shell's Ren Alvarez and Ronald Tabal in their PBA game Friday. Shell won, 84-78. (Related story on A23)

Gee Abanilla likely to replace Pumaren

ABANILLA

Canare leads lady keglers; Suarez trails Rivera by 134

PWEDE NANG MAG-BABOY ARAW-ARAW!

Solons to summon AFP auditors to House probe

By Norman Bordadora and Carlito Pablo

THE HOUSE committee on national defense will summon the state auditors assigned to the Armed Forces General Headquarters during May, Gen. Carlos Garcia's term as comptroller, according to committee chair Prospero Nograles, Buddy Cordero.

"What we have here is the [COA] Commission on Audit being part of the syndicate. That's why we are summoning them [the auditors] in the inquiry," Cordero told reporters after a breakfast meeting hours yesterday at Quezon City.

Cordero said the investigation of the alleged corruption in the military procurement process would progress if nobody would point out specific instances.

He said that with the willingness of certain suppliers and military officers, documentary inputs/inserts such as delivery and inventory receipts, and even certificates of consumption, could be fabricated to cover irregular expenditures.

Cordero quoted Col. Rafael Ragino, the AFP-sanctioned general, as saying that Garcia was now fit to face the inquiry of the House inquiry on his unexplained wealth.

He said state auditors as well as other officers involved in the procurement process could be invited to testify.

But opposition congressmen are questioning the inquiry.

For one, House minorities are not supposed to hold inquiries during the recess, Quezon City Rep. Vincent Crisologo said in a phone interview.

The deputy minority leader said the House committee on rules cleared by Majority Leader Rep. Prospero Nograles had authorized only the committees on appropriations to hold hearings on the proposed 2005 budget during the Sept. 29-Oct. 29 break.

"We're not protecting the generals, but we in the minority have reservations on whether the current investigation has been clothed with the proper authority," Crisologo said.

The two-hundred committees have held three hearings and are to resume the inquiry tomorrow.

But Reyes said the inquiry had been authorized by the entire House when it approved its budget during the Sept. 14, 2004 plenary session itself.

The Court of Appeals ordered on Wednesday a freeze of the Garcias' 48 bank accounts in the country after finding that "probable cause exists that an unlawful activity and/or a money-laundering offense is about to be, is being, or has been committed."

Solicitor General Alfredo Benipayo said these accounts contained "huge amounts of money believed to constitute proceeds of illegal activities..."

GMA satisfied

Bunye said the President was satisfied with the way the AFP leadership was handling the investigation of senior officers and believed that the probe has silenced some long-simmering unrest.

Mr. Arroyo, however, said last week that if men who had endorsed the AFP as subject Garcia to a court-martial.

Malacañang also rejected a proposal by opposition Sen. Edgardo Angara to turn Garcia into a state witness to encourage him to spill the beans on his superiors and other officials who might have benefited from corruption in the military.

Bunye said in an ABS-CBN radio interview that this proposal was "premature" because it had not been established that Garcia had accomplices and that he was the best guilty among them.

He reiterated Malacañang's position that the guilty parties should be identified, and said the investigations being conducted by the Ombudsman and Congress should be transparent and open to the public.

'Verbal directive'

AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Narciso Abaya has ordered Garcia's transfer from the UST Hospital in Manila to the AFP Medical Center on V. Luna, Quezon City, "to save on his health allowance of," Lt. Col. Daniel Lucero told reporters.

Lucero, chief of the AFP Public Information Office, denied that the military leadership was helpless in moving Garcia from the private hospital, and said Abaya's "verbal directive" would be carried out "to-ordered."

He did not give a specific time for the transfer.

Judges did not help. Prospero Pichay Jr., co-chair of the powerful Commission on Appointments, called on Abaya to work double-time during the remaining days of his term to resolve Garcia's case.

He warned, Abaya should immediately convene the court martial to try Garcia, Pichay said.

Abaya reaches the mandatory retirement age of 56 on Oct. 20.

Pichay said the Commission on Appointments would thoroughly vet the next AFP chief to ensure that he would be able to institute reforms in the military.

"We must determine whether he has any participation in corruption similar to Garcia's," the congressman said. "A dirty chief of staff will just only perpetuate the corruption prevalent in the military."

With reports from Juliet Labog-Javellana, Alexis Pepa and Carlito Pablo

Garcia took P44M to US, documents say

Transcription #1

$100,000.

The Ombudsman report said Garcia declared that he was earning $15,000 when he arrived in the United States on June 1, 1995, as pursuer consular's degree at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California. On Aug. 1, 1995, he again declared $15,000.

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez yesterday said the Philippine government had formally asked US authorities to freeze the Garcia assets in the United States.

Gonzalez said it was the Anti-Money Laundering Council that made the formal request through the RP-US Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty.

Based on the information of Homeland Security has so far identified three Garcia assets—a $765,000 Trump Park Avenue Condominium at 502 Park Avenue, New York; a $710,000 apartment at 111 East 34th Street, also in New York, and a $600,000 at 6251 Vancouver Drive, Alexandria, Va.

While the value of the Ohio house remains undetermined, it is the known US address of the general's wife and their sons Ian Carl, Juan Paolo and Timothy Mark, all living in the same house.

Garcia, a 1971 graduate of the Philippine Military Academy, was assigned to the Armed Forces Corps of Engineers (AFCE) from 1975 to 1999. He served in the logistics office from 1989 to 1998, and was then installed as the CE when he served in various capacities, including as chief of engineers from May 20, 2000 to March 27, 2001.

He was named AFP deputy chief of staff for comptrollership on March 28, 2001. He draws a monthly salary of P57,000.

Flights

Citing records from the Bureau of Immigration, the Ombudsman report said Garcia and his wife left for Amsterdam on Dec. 7, 2003, and returned to the Philippines on Dec. 20.

It was in the same month that the Garcia sons left Manila and boarded a Philippine Airlines flight to San Francisco, where they were held by customs authorities for failing to declare the $200,000.

On Jan. 14, 2004, Clarita Garcia left Manila on board a Northwest Airlines flight to Nagoya, immigration records showed.

On May 10, 2002, she and her two sons took a PAL flight to San Francisco, but only Juan Paolo returned to the Philippines on May 20.

The Ombudsman looked into the Garcias' travels and financial transactions after Zaid Mottoc, an aide-de-camp to Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes, wrote a letter saying that the US Department of Homeland Security was investigating the family for violating US money laundering laws," the report said.

Mottoc attached to the letter a sworn statement by Carlos Garcia to the IG against that the currency confiscated from his sons was "questionable money" and "ill-gotten wealth" that was intended military ventures to build roads, bridges and houses for the military, the report said.

Mottoc's letter was dated Sept. 14, 2004. The Ombudsman started the investigation on Sept. 17.

Ombudsman investigators filed criminal complaint and recommended Garcia's preventive suspension.

'We have to be careful'

Gonzalez, however, said authorities should be careful in looking into the assets of Garcia and other generals suspected of corruption.

"Let's look at the assets that were illegally acquired. Not all of them are illegal," he said, adding:

"We cannot just be running around here."

Gonzalez said some of the generals' assets might have been acquired while prices were still low.

"I got my house [in Manila] at P700 per square meter in 1981. Now it's worth P35,000 [per sq.m.]," he said. "We have to be careful, or nobody would consider joining the government."

Malacañang also appealed to the opposition not to drag the whole AFP down.

"The opposition should not use the Garcia issue to rake up issues against the whole institution," said Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye, President Macapagal-Arroyo's spokesperson.

Bunye said senior military officers were already "being called and brought to justice."

"There are many generals who have stuck to the line of duty and the code of integrity," he said, adding that "through the majority of honest and faithful soldiers, the AFP can redeem itself."

Too old to reenact the promised return of MacArthur

Transcription #3

soldiers. This will be a showcase of the valor of the Filipino soldier," said veterans director Romulo "Teng" de los Reyes, also a committee member.

The tableau will be interspersed in a military parade that will include six boat-borne projects at the sprawling MacArthur Landing Memorial National Park in Palo, Leyte.

"The idea is to commemorate the sacrifices of our people. We should give recognition to our guerrillas and veterans. They're dying as we speak," said this. Herbert Gordon, who co-chairs the committee with foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo.

Ford can't make it

President Macapagal-Arroyo will address the veterans, the descendants of the deceased veterans and guests, including ranking officials of the government.

Ms. Arroyo had invited former US President Gerald Ford to be guest of honor, but his chief of staff expressed regrets, saying Ford had prior commitments.

Gordon said the veterans, Ford, then a naval officer, was on board the USS Monterey, a light aircraft carrier that was part of the allied fleet of over 700 ships that landed on the beaches of Leyte 60 years ago.

No MacArthur kin

US Embassy officials are not optimistic that any of the relatives of MacArthur would be able to come for the ceremonies, but were hopeful the descendants of veterans, like the late General and Foreign Secretary Carlos P. Romulo, would make it.

Romulo was immortalized in the famous photo that showed him behind MacArthur as the general hit the shore. Romulo's son, Roberto, is a former foreign secretary himself while his nephew, Alberto, is the current foreign secretary.

Map be their last

Over 1,000 veterans, mostly Filipinos, are expected to be in Leyte for what could be their "last major commemoration" of the liberation.

Some may not be around for the 65th or 70th celebration, organizers said.

Each veteran will receive a commemorative lapel badge which captures the landings in miniature and is adorned with the phrase, "Italian to Valor."

"They will have something to take home and cherish," Cruz, acting director of the Department of Foreign Affairs' Office of American Affairs, said of the badge. "It's a token, of course. It's something to be proud of."

The veterans will converge before dawn for a 5 a.m. "sunrise ceremony" where they will lay wreaths at the Filipino Soldier Monument and there.

At 6 p.m. "sunset ceremony," they will light candles on the shores of Red Beach, one of the beaches they stormed in 1944.

The festivities will allow 10 spine veterans to reunite here with their counterparts from the United States, Australia, the United Kingdom and New Zealand.

"We would like to celebrate these events with authority, but with meaning," Cruz said. "So in a way we would like to celebrate them with the tightest budget possible, but with a meaningful and high event. Not just to the veterans, but to the youth as well," he said.

Australia, US veterans

Australia is bringing in some 20 to 40 veterans aboard three ships. The US Embassy is unsure about the number of its veterans flying in.

"There's talk of many dozens, perhaps several hundreds of them. But you know they are very old. They want to come, and we're trying to get as many of them as possible," US Embassy Charge d'Affaires Joseph Mussomeli said.

"Most of them will be accompanied by their children or grandchildren. But you know they are very old. They want to come, and we're trying to get as many of them as possible," US Embassy Charge d'Affaires Joseph Mussomeli said.

"Most of them will be accompanied by their children or grandchildren. But you know they are very old. They want to come, and we're trying to get as many of them as possible," US Embassy Charge d'Affaires Joseph Mussomeli said.

GEN. DOUGLAS MACARTHUR (wearing his signature dark glasses) after the landing in Palo, Leyte, declares the reestablishment of the Philippine Commonwealth on the homepage of the Leyte Capitol. To his left is President Sergio Osmeña. This photo is on display at the Malacañang ancestral home in Tacloban City.

A GLIMPSE of history: US Embassy Charge d' Affaires Joseph Mussomeli (right) recently toured the Corazon Aquino-Ramon de los Reyes Jr. Foundation Museum and Fine Arts Collection in Cavite, which is home to over 100 rare photographs, including those of the Leyte Landings on Oct. 20, 1944.

Air Force losing pilots, mechanics to airlines

PILOTS and skilled aircraft mechanics of the Philippine Air Force are leaving in droves for commercial airlines where the pay is much higher.

Vice Commander Lt. Col. Bonifacio Badilla Jr. yesterday confirmed that about 100 veteran pilots had opted to retire early to accept the lucrative offers of airlines.

He identified one of those as Cebu Pacific Air, which is expanding its international routes.

Commercial airlines offer pilots over an annual salary of P600,000 to P80,000 a month, which translates to as much as P7200,000 or more per month, excluding allowances, compared to PAF pilots who get a basic P35,000 or less monthly, depending on their rank.

Badilla said the wages offered by commercial airlines was just too lucrative and tempting for PAF pilots to turn down.

Aside from this, a big number of skilled Air Force aircraft mechanics are moving to the private sector or going abroad for greener pastures, he said.

"Aircraft mechanics are hard to replace because it takes years to train skilled ones," Badilla said.

He said most of the mechanics go to the Middle East where they receive huge salaries.

The exodus of PAF pilots and aircraft mechanics to the private sector has averted Air Force officials, particularly Lt. Gen. Jose Reyes, PAF commanding general.

Another reason pilots and mechanics are leaving is the PAF lacks planes and hub experts, Badilla said.

What planes it has have been grounded, like all its F-5 jet fighters because of their lack of airworthiness like cracks on the fuselage.

Reyes said that for the PAF fighter pilots to maintain their flying proficiency in the meantime, they have to undergo periodic simulated flying.

The PAF and the Philippine Navy are high on the list of the modernization programs of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, but hard luck has hampered any new acquisitions.

The Air Force's plans to acquire a squadron of 18 new multi-role aircraft has remained on the drawing board for two decades, while the air forces of countries around Asia have modernized their fleets.

Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore and Thailand have modern fighter jets like the US-made F-16 and the FDF Rafale produced by Russia. PNA

Party-list Rep. Benjamin Cruz dies at 70

BEN BENJAMIN Cruz (party-list Bantay Republic Party) died on Friday after an illness. He was 70.

Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. lauded Cruz for his "legacy as a consistent advocate of the Filipino-Chinese social."

Cruz was on his second term in the House as a party-list lawmaker and had been appointed chair of the special committee on food security in the 13th Congress.

"The House mourns the passing of Rep. Cruz," De Venecia said. He said Cruz's remains would be brought to the lower chamber next week for necrological services.

Cruz had long been identified with peasant organizations. Cynthia Pable-

Jalosjos may be discharged, says doc

By Nancy C. Carvajal

CONVICTED former Zamboanga Rep. Romeo Jalosjos can be returned to prison after his doctor approved his discharge from the Makati Medical Center last Friday.

Dr. Ambrosio King, a cardiologist, gave the go-signal after seeing the results of the angiogram done on Jalosjos. The test results indicated that Jalosjos was free of coronary artery disease.

An angiogram is an X-ray examination of one's blood. A specialist trained in interventional radiology performs the procedure.

"The possibility of the patient suffering a heart attack is slim," King told the Inquirer in a phone interview.

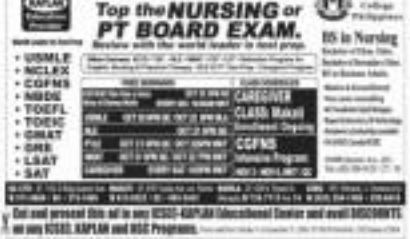
King, however, said he was only a "relieved" since Jalosjos' attending physician, Dr. Romeo Estrellado, was out of the country.

Dr. Saturnino P. Javier, an interventional cardiologist at the Makati Medical Center, confirmed the results of the angiogram done on Jalosjos to the Inquirer.

Jalosjos was confined at the hospital after suffering what was believed to be a heart attack in his cell on Oct. 2.

In a separate interview, Jasmin Leopando, penal superintendent at the New Bilibid Prisons, said Jalosjos would be brought back to the national penitentiary in Muntinlupa City "on Monday at the latest."

Jalosjos has refused to return to NBP because of alleged threats to his life. He said he had information he would be killed on his way back to the prison or once he is back inside. He did not say who warned him dead, however.



The WORLD

Editor Lorenzo B. Gozon

5 churches hit by bomb explosions across Baghdad

BAGHDAD—Insurgents exploded seven car bombs around Baghdad on Saturday morning followed by an artillery shell striking in a hotel parking lot near a sixth church, causing damage but no casualties, officials said.

"There were five explosions caused by improvised bombs near to those churches," said Col. Adnan Abdel Rahman, an interior ministry spokesperson.

The pastor of the Chaldean Church, Msgr. Emmanuel Delly, expressed the fears of his beleaguered community.

"If the government is powerless, what can we do?" Delly said.

"We call on them (attackers) not to reach the holy sites," he said, apparently unaware of the regular Iraq-versus-Christians comments, the church of Saint Joseph in the west of the Iraqi capital was hit at about 6:00 a.m. (0300 GMT), the spokesperson said.

Twenty minutes later, another blast ripped through the street at another Saint Joseph church, in Dora, southern Baghdad. After another 20 minutes, Saint Paul's church was struck in the same area.

At 4:30 a.m., the Roman Catholic St. George church in the central district of Karrada was rocked by a blast and engulfed in flames, leaving the wood-built sanctuary completely charred.

A fifth explosion occurred about an hour later at Saint Thomas church in Mansour, to the west.

The violence mounted hours later when an artillery shell was fired into a car park between a hotel and Saint George's Anglican church, witnesses and US soldiers said.

"There were no injuries," said Youth Ali, a security guard who had been sitting at the front gate to the hotel.

The projectile struck directly opposite the church but it was unclear whether it had been the target, an AFP reporter said.

Minor fire cuts were damaged in the blast.

The US military said it knew of three explosions in the vicinity of the churches. One church caught fire after an explosion inside the building; a bomb exploded outside a second church; and a Molotov cocktail was thrown at a third, said Maj. Philip Smith.

Iraq's Christian community has been heavily targeted in the unrest that has swept Iraq following last year's US-led invasion and some have picked up and left.

At the start of August, four attacks against Christian targets in Baghdad and two others in Mosul left 10 people dead and 50 injured.

Besides large-scale attacks, liquor stores, owned by Christians, have been blown up by Islamic militants.

There are only about 700,000 Christians in Iraq, or three percent of the country's population of some 25 million people, which is majority Muslim. AFP

THE CHURCHES were bombed as Muslims across the world marked the first days of Ramadan, a month of fasting, prayer and giving. Photo shows a Turkish Muslim praying in a mosque. AFP

New York oil price bolts to record $55

NEW YORK—New York's main crude oil price bolted to a record $55 a barrel Friday as traders fretted about record supplies, hot demand and thin stocks of winter heating fuel.

New York's benchmark contract, light sweet crude for delivery in November, shot to an unprecedented 55 dollars a barrel before closing at a record settlement of $54.93, up 1.7 cents on the day.

Brent North Sea crude for November hit 50.13 dollars but closed at 49.91 dollars, down 15 cents.

New York crude boomed as traders rode the momentum of a new 79-percent surge so far this year, Refco market analyst Marshall Steeves said.

"I think the momentum is going to keep it going for a while," Steeves said.

Crude oil prices have soared on concerns that producers are pumping at near full capacity to meet voracious global demand, particularly from China and India, leaving no wriggle room for any supply interruptions.

Market fears deepened after a US government report Thursday showed commercial heating oil supplies dropping lower, Steeves said.

"Obviously as we move into late October and November, conditions will get colder in the northeast where most of the heating oil is consumed," the analyst said.

Inventories of distillates—mainly diesel and heating oil—dropped 2.1 million barrels to 120.9 million in the week to Oct. 8, the US Energy Department said.

"The market fears that the US is nearing out of time to build winter fuel supplies, which are also short in Europe and Asia," analysts at the Sucden brokerage firm said in London.

High oil prices should have a more muted impact on US economic growth and inflation than the 1970s oil shock, however, Federal Reserve chairman Greenspan said in a speech here.

But the boom could intensify if oil prices moved "materially higher," he warned.

The Federal Reserve boss said in a speech here that he believed "part of the recent rise in spot prices is expected to work out over the longer run." "In a sound—short way Alan Greenspan kind of gave the green light for prices to go higher," by making the case that the economy could withstand rising energy costs, said Alastair Dowling analyst Phil Flynn.

Earlier in the day, suspension of organized strike to major crude producer Nigeria had helped to contain oil fears, traders said.

Would oil prices have more than doubled from about 26 dollars a barrel in New York at the start of 2002, surging by nearly 79 percent, in Nine Months since the start of this year.

Adjusted for inflation, however, they remain far below the levels reached in the wake of the 1979 Iranian revolution when prices surged to upwards of 80 dollars a barrel in today's money. AFP

2 US soldiers killed, 3 wounded in Afghanistan

KABUL—Two US troops were killed and three wounded by a mine detonated by remote control in Afghanistan's south-central province of Uruzgan, the US military said Saturday.

"We had five casualties, two killed in action and three injured in action," US military spokesperson Scott Nelson told AFP, adding the troops were all US nationals.

They had been on a routine patrol Thursday in the Deh Rawood District in the south of the province when the mine was detonated as they passed by, he said.

A remote-controlled bomb also killed five people in the east of the violence-plagued country, an Afghan official said.

The five, who included a policeman, were killed in eastern Ghazni province late Friday after the bomb exploded near a truck supplying food to US bases.

"The truck had been stopped and set on fire by suspected loyalists of the ousted Taliban regime. AFP

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PALESTINIANS sit on the rubble of their house demolished by Israeli bulldozers, after Israeli tanks withdrew from the Jabaliya refugee camp at northern Gaza Strip Oct. 10. REUTERS

Israel ends huge Gaza offensive

GAZA—Israeli tanks rumbled out of the Gaza Strip on Friday, ending a massive 18-day offensive that killed at least 100 Palestinians in an attempt to stop rocket fire into the Israeli town.

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon ordered the biggest raid into Gaza in the past four years of conflict under pressure from an unlikely ally ahead of a planned withdrawal from the occupied territory by the end of 2005.

It followed the killing of two toddlers in an Israeli town on Sept. 29 by a rocket fired from Gaza.

Witnesses said all 200 tanks and armored vehicles in northern Gaza had withdrawn. Palestinians watched as tanks rolled out, then thronged the streets in celebration. Hamas Islamic militants claimed the withdrawal as a victory.

An Israeli military source said the pullout was meant to ease restrictions on Palestinians during the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan. Sharon's spokesman said they would return if there were more rocket attacks.

"We will move to and act whenever we feel there is threat," said Raanan Gissin.

The offensive left a trail of destruction in northern Gaza.

Witnesses said electricity was knocked out in the town of Beit Hanoun. Troops had also uprooted many olive and citrus groves, which Israel says gave rocket squads a place to hide.

Tanks that had rumbled through crowded neighborhoods damaged homes and torn up roads and water pipes.

Palestinian medics said Israeli forces killed at least 92 militants and 12 other Palestinians believed to be civilians.

Gunmen killed three Israelis in north Gaza and a Thai farm worker in a settlement raid.

Four Palestinians were killed on Friday, including a 70-year old woman who was shot dead while eating her evening meal, breaking the ban on the first day of Ramadan. Palestinian medics and witnesses said Israeli gunfire killed the woman, but a military source said it was not clear who killed her.

The Islamic group Hamas, many of whose militants have been killed by Israeli forces during the raid, said it considered the pullout a victory.

"The Zionist army has retreated in defeat from all the positions," said Hamas spokesman Fathi Hamdani. "We consider it a victory for our resistance." Israeli Deputy Defense Minister Zevi Hendzel said the operation had largely achieved its goal. Overnight, several Qassam rockets struck the southern Israeli town of Sderot on Friday without causing casualties.

Qassam attacks have complicated Sharon's efforts to overcome right-wing opposition to his plan to remove all 21 Gaza settlements and four of 120 in the West Bank, starting next May.

Polls show most Israelis support a Gaza pullout, regarding the area as too costly in lives and money. Reuters

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Spain royals hold throne due to forgery, book says

ROME—Spain's royal Bourbon family occupies the throne because France's Sun King Louis XIV forged a will, two Italian authors claim in a forthcoming book.

His aim was to prevent a member of the Hapsburg family, ruler to much of Europe, from succeeding the Hapsburg king (Charles I) of Spain.

"Secret wars" is the second work by Alix Mourault and Francesco Rossi, who in 2003 published "Impostor.st," an inquiry into the secrets of the Vatican and intrigue at the court of Louis XIV.

Like its predecessor, "Secret wars" takes the form of historical novel but according to Rossi it is based on research in French foreign ministry archives and the Mediceo-Lorena Library in Florence.

As part of their argument the authors asked two expert graphologists to examine the will of Charles II, who died in 1700 aged 39.

Marina Tonini and Andrea Fiaschi, accredited experts to the courts of Verona (northeast Italy) and Naples (south), said the documents they had been asked to review was a forgery.

Their findings were deposited with a lawyer in Vienna and can be consulted on request.

Charles II died childless and in his will designated Philip of Anjou, nephew of Louis XIV, his heir.

"If Charles II had chosen a Hapsburg, as he had suggested he would, (King) Juan Carlos of Bourbon would not today be on the throne of Spain," the authors argue.

"History would undoubtedly have been quite different. The will of Charles II led as a consequence the War of the Spanish Succession (1710-1714) which brought France and the whole continent to its knees," they said.

"If he had not taken the throne of Spain, Philip of Anjou would without doubt have become King of France. There would not have been the Regency (1715-1723) and, who knows, perhaps there would not have been the French revolution," said Tonini. AFP

25TH YEAR POPE John Paul II celebrating a mass of beatification, Sept. 19, 1999. The pontiff, whom pedants like to joke has buried many of his successors, quietly celebrated the 26th anniversary of his election as pope Oct. 16, 2004. AFP

5 nations win seats on UN Council

UNITED NATIONS—Argentina, Denmark, Greece, Japan and Tanzania on Friday won consecutive two-year terms on the 191 Security Council at a time when pressure is mounting to expand the powerful 15-nation body.

The 191-nation UN General Assembly elected the five, all unopposed, to fill vacancies created by the departure of Angola, Chile, Germany, Pakistan and Spain on Dec. 31.

The council has five permanent members—the United States, Britain, France, Russia and China—and 10 nonpermanent seats, chosen by region, five of which change hands every year.

Algeria, Benin, Brazil, the Philippines and Romania, which began their terms in January 2004, will remain on the council for another year.

The Security Council is responsible for international peace and security and its decisions can be legally binding on all UN members.

With the UN marking its 60th birthday next year, there is growing pressure to enlarge the council, whose five permanent members have held onto their seats and unlimited veto power since the end of World War II in 1945.

Japan's new council seat could help its campaign for a permanent seat. Tokyo has joined forces with Germany, Brazil and India, all of whom say they should be represented permanently on the council.

Japan is the second largest financial contributor to the UN after the US, paying some 20 percent of the organization's regular budget.

Others seeking a permanent seat include Italy, Egypt, Nigeria and South Africa.

In Tokyo, Foreign Minister Nobutaka Machimura said Japan would use its two-year seat to help build the case for Security Council reform including a permanent seat for itself. Reuters

Bush rhetoric seen masking reality in Afghanistan

KABUL—Three years after the US-led invasion, Afghanistan is flooding the world with heroin, warlords reign in the provinces, women are scared and the new security forces are malnourished and underpaid, analysts say.

But as he bids for re-election, US President George W. Bush is championing Afghanistan's move to own presidential polls as a symbol of success in nation-building.

His Democrat challenger John Kerry meanwhile makes the downside of reconstruction from Afghanistan to Iraq and the failure to nail Osama bin Laden three years ago key planks of his attack.

Bush's vision of success in Afghanistan since US forces helped overthrow the Taliban Islamic regime in late 2001 is now mixed, the analysts say. But Kerry's criticism may be over-simplistic, they add.

"Bush has painted a more positive picture than exists on the ground... and expressed concern prematurely," said Vikram Parekh, Afghan affairs analyst for the International Crisis Group.

"When Bush presents Afghanistan as a country which has made great strides towards democracy, Osama bin Laden and Mullah Omar, Taliban supreme leader, are still at large, and Afghanistan is the world's largest producer of opium, which finances terrorist groups, including al-Qaeda," Parekh said.

"Ultimately the country is under the control of the warlords and Karzai's government does not run beyond Kabul. Right now it's virtual mayhem rule whether you look east, west, north or south of Kabul.

"The issue not is Afghanistan's progress in moving up its own army. Billion dollars were for 70,000 and they've not been able to raise beyond 15,000.

"This lack of a national army is directly related to the failure of the government to reign in various peoples."

Poppy cultivation is set to slump 40 percent this year, the UN predicts, after a bumper crop last year supplied 90 percent of Europe's heroin and three quarters of the worldwide supply.

It brought in 2.3 billion dollars to Afghanistan last year, 35 percent of gross domestic product, making it the crippled economy's biggest source of revenue.

Parekh points out last week's presidential and parliamentary elections are not held until April, because of insecurity and logistical problems.

"That's still going to be a formidable task to administer," Parekh told AFP. "By postponing it, we haven't addressed the challenges that we, the international community have committed to."

Post-election claims by the US military that the Taliban are a spent force after failing to sabotage the elections, were "fairly much a premature conclusion," Parekh said.

Bush capitalised on the low turn out (Oct. 9 Voting cast by a refugee woman in Pakistan, to underscore women's emancipation from Taliban-imposed repression.

Outside Kabul, however, most are still in self-imposed purdah, and women are scared to speak out.

Human Rights Watch said a "pervasive atmosphere of fear" persists for women involved in politics. "Many Afghan women risk their safety if they participate in public life," it said in a report this month.

Proving the province from the rule of the gun was also a long way off.

"Large parts of the country remain dominated by militia and the disarmament process has made scant progress," Parekh said.

Most Afghans told Human Rights Watch they were more afraid of local militias commanders than the Taliban.

The mental disarmament drive in one year has stripped just over 12,000 militiamen of weapons, but at least 50,000 are said to remain there.

Every senseless finds of making "a colossal error of judgment" in diverting resources from the hunt for bin Laden to the war in Iraq.

"Instead of using US forces we relied on the warlords to capture Osama bin Laden, when he was cornered in the mountains in December 2001," he said in a campaign speech. AFP

Bush

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Requirements:

Tanong Ko Bayan

Garcia at Ilang Isneral:Court martial o civil trial?

Abdullah Sy, Naga City

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OPINION

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Flaws

FOUR days ago, the Singapore Straits Times picked up on the controversy involving errors in Philippine textbooks. Rather gleefully, it treated Singaporeans and other foreign readers to a catalogue of errors in a textbook, and a summary of the fight between the man who exposed those errors and our Department of Education. A fight, in true Philippine style, complete with full-

EDITORIALS

page ads and recriminations, followed by a stubborn refusal to act—and an equally typical announcement that reforms would be initiated by the DepEd.

Now that the DepEd has decided to do something about not error-filled textbooks, the country can move beyond the acrimony between the department and Antonio Calipjo Go. With the common objective now clear to everybody—to correct mistakes in textbooks and tighten up the procedures that allowed the approval of substandard textbooks and their entry into our education system—the question is: On whose lap should the responsibility for reforms fall?

It is a fact that the primary responsibility for the scandalous approval of flawed textbooks lies with the DepEd. Equal responsibility lies with the publishers of these textbooks and those hired to prepare them. But the teachers and parents are as much responsible.

Textbooks with wrong and misleading information are not only an indictment of the sloppy, irresponsible souls—which range on the criminal—and plain stupidity of people in the DepEd; they are also an indictment of the publishers who commission incompetent people to write textbooks, and then peddle those books to the DepEd and the schools.

Indicted, too, are the schools that accepted such books and foisted them on their students. Of these schools—and there certainly have been quite a number—that accepted such books, the public indeed has a right to ask: How on earth did these schools come to accept such books as fit for students? But blame should also go to parents, who didn't seem to have taken the time to look into what their children were being taught.

And remedies

AS THE government goes ahead in purging the textbook system of corruption and plain stupidity, a call must be made for all sectors to do their part.

Publishers must be held answerable for the content of the books they print and sell for educational purposes. Officials must be personally held responsible for the factual correctness of what they approve. Schools, too, must be held accountable, if not by the government, then by the parents, for what they require their students to buy and read. Teachers must institute ways for errors to be rectified and reported, and for receiving, handling and addressing complaints about instructional materials. And parents must not shirk their responsibility to supervise the education of their children. Too many sectors have been willing to pass on responsibility to the state, when what keeps the state responsible is the vigilance of its citizens.

The academic communities, too, may have been remiss or simply ignored. Professional academic associations are spineless and they could have done their part in the issuance of a seal of approval for textbooks that cover their areas of expertise. At the very least, amid the pressing public call for a thorough review of schoolbooks, the door should be opened for them to step in and help out.

Finally, as we go about instituting the needed reforms, it may serve well to ask: In a time of economic hardship and dwindling resources, must so many different kinds of textbooks be published? And must every student have to purchase a brand new book?

In the past, Filipino students were issued a book at the start of the school year, which they had to return at the end of that same school year, to be passed on to the next class. This is the practice in many countries far richer than ours. Generations of Filipinos received a good education through the use of standardized books, such as the Onias readers. In the process of being issued and having to return a book, they saved money and learned to be responsible stewards of books.

In the effort to deliver basic information, we wonder if having a flood of different textbooks isn't tantamount to squandering resources: financial, intellectual, and even moral.

The pathetic record of our public schools

SEPARATE OPINION

Augusto A. Cruz

I WAS appalled by the recent report that as many as 37.9 percent of the public high school seniors who took the National Achievement Test given by the Department of Education last April failed to get the mind-passing score of 75 percent. Their mean percentage score was only 56.08 in English, 56.80 in science and 41.20 in mathematics. Of the about 990,000 students who took the test, only 20.08 percent, or some 20,000 only, got a score of 75 percent or higher.

The report added that of the 1.4 million elementary school graduates who took the High School Readiness Test for admission to the secondary level, only 64 percent got a score of 75 percent or higher. Worse, half of the examinees failed to get a grade of even only 50 percent, and there were more than 500,000 of them.

I was appalled by these results, but I was not surprised. I had not expected much from our public school students, but I was alarmed just the same by their meager and disgraceful performance. It was the latest in a continuous record of our public schools before the war, when we were still under the American administration.

For all their faults, those were imperial, idyllic vanguard in their Candian pinafores—taught our masses to read and write and even desire the bright ones to go to American colleges. We learned more about Washington and Lincoln rather than Rizal and Bonifacio, for at least it was a start, and soon enough we were penning our own history. The popular exhilaration generated by the Thomasites and continued by their successors made the Philippines the most literate country in the whole of Asia and the most fluent in English among the Orientals.

But that was in the past, and it is not true any more. Where before even the kanins and the mugunday could manage a halting conversation in English with the foreigner, now the ordinary pupil or even college graduate can't put one sane sentence together in English. Before, even the illiterate could understand the meaning of signs in what to them is a dead language. The little they know of English they have learned from the television and radio shows and not in school as before. The linguistic view today is that knowledge of English, which others in Asian nations are striving hard to learn, is eroding in the Philippines.

I am a product of the public school system and remember with pleasure how I studied at the Legarda Elementary School and the Rizal High School and then in the 40's on Padre Faura, Mr. Dizon, have computers then and I enjoyed our outdoor recess. We taught more than we learned in our time when life was much simpler and there wasn't so much to understand in the process of and the question then. I myself don't remember much of what we studied in chemistry and calculus. But I have retained much from the poetry of John Donne, the stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald and Mark Twain, and the wisdom of Gardenia.

The present system of public education in our country is in a sad state of neglect and deterioration. There is a dearth of competent and dedicated teachers, well-prepared textbooks, school buildings, classrooms, and campuses, adequate working equipments, and, yes, even of school spirit and pride. The students of our public schools have none, and others rightly so, they are inferior to the private school students who at least enjoy better opportunities for the improvement of their minds and bodies in the more salutary academic atmosphere that prevails in private schools.

Are you listening?

MOMENTS

Fr. Jerry M. Orbos, SVD

SOMEONE once told me that there are two signs that one is getting old. The first sign is that one gets to be forgetful. The second is...I forgot!

* * *

In today's Gospel (Lk 18, 1-8), Jesus teaches us to pray continually so that God will take notice, and will not forget. Just as the poor widow moved the judge to give us to her request, so too will God listen to our persistent prayers. God does listen, and He does answer all our prayers even if He delays us time, and often not according to the way we want it. The assurance is there: He is listening, He is to respond, we are not alone.

* * *

Two frogs fell into a deep cream bowl. The one was wise, and a cheery soul.

The other one took a gloomy view / And bade his friend a sad adieu.

Said the other frog (such a merry guy), / "I guess we better have a go and die."

(Victim around till my strength is spent, / Then I will die the more content."

And as he swam, though ever is around, / His struggling began to churn the cream.

Until at last a pat of butter he conjured, / And out of the bowl he quickly hopped.

So there are no hopeless situations, only people (and frogs!) who have given hope less about their circumstances.

* * *

Fr. Charlie de Guzman, SVD, can tell you that persistence does pay. After 35 years, Fr. Ate Charlie finally made it to the priesthood. He entered Christ the King Seminary in 1979. In 1982, he left the seminary and went to America where he became the vice president for finance of a construction company. Although those years, the desire to become a missionary somehow never died. It was something the could not explain. Though a call he kept hearing within his heart. He prayed the rosary every day. Unable to deny the call, he re-entered the SVD seminary in Chicago and was ordained a priest (finally) last June 5, 2004. His mission assignment is Spain. Before Charlie is one of our 120 Filipino SVD missionaries working in some 36 countries all over the world, persistently continuing Christ's mandate to spread the Gospel to all creation.

* * *

My very own Papa is a very good example of humble, but manipulative persistence. In particular, Papa told us, as children, how he was able to get the hand of Mama in marriage. He continually writing to her. He told that my World War II, he persisted in his letter writing. Papa always told us that even if he was an "embarkng," he showed his sincerity and goodness through the years, and in the end, Mama finally fell from among her suitors. Always Papa's favorite expression through the years is "During trying times, don't stop writing!"

* * *

We can learn from our valuable teachers and mentors who are not ashamed to pray in public. I and my group recently experienced something like this in country while we were in the Singapore airport. We were praying the rosary in a quiet corner and there were many people who were milling in line. Some were bored as Rosaries), there were also those who laughed and even sneered at us, but it was one unforgettable experience of persistent witnessing prayer. How can ever experienced professing your faith to others, especially in unfavorable moments and situations?

* * *

Rev Dios is one beautiful example of hope and persistent prayer. She who was dying of cancer gave so much hope and was not afraid to say so. The present public school is in the Philippines is a poor reflection of the affluent private school, where before the computer was invented.

One reason for the poor quality of our public school students today is the deterioration in literacy—if show business. The movies, television and radio have corrupted to cheapen the sense of values of such students in general and impaired their intellectual and other social virtues. A striking example is the decline of the simple matter of courtesy, which was taken for granted before but is often a source of wonder now. One gained sense was instructed in school subjects and conceptual matters, but students today would rather watch the vulgar antics of television clowns like Bing Rivelle who is content to be such a eminent entertainer.

Senator Recilla is the current proof of the deepening of the educational process and the degradation of our democracy. He doesn't even know the meaning of "filibuster" and is a disgraced senator by disrecording it from the camera if more reminiscences ride on a contention. His undiscriminating audience obviously believes that a good buffoon will make a good senator. That audience should have realized by now from the disgraceful performance of Bevilla's predecessors but it had to show once again its misguided faith in the hocus-pocus of clowns in public service.

I have said often enough that the time was to start setting (misspelled) it is to educate our people on the proper exercise of their suffrages. That is why it is imperative that we improve the quality of our schools as a first step toward civic consciousness. That is where we may begin to elevate their persons people choose senators fast of undermining buffoons to responsible thinking citizens. They must understand that public office is a serious business and certainly no joke.

Moments with the Lord:

Lord, I believe, I know that you are always there, and that you are really listening. Amen.

A leadership vacuum in the Armed Forces

REVEILLE

Ramon J. Farolan

WHEN a crisis, be it natural or man-made, breaks out in a country, the leader who rises to the occasion in times of adversity usually breaks off from all his engagements and returns home immediately to rally his people and to restore confidence and morale among those badly shaken by the disaster.

In the case of Gen. Narciso Abaya, chief of staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, in the midst of one of the gravest problems facing the AFP in recent years—perhaps, even greater than the threats from the New People's Army or the communist forces in the country—he flew off to Washington to deliver a conference attended by 32 colleagues from the Asia Pacific region. He left his deputy, Vice Adm. Antonio Adan Reyes to face the wrath of a congressional committee which was held on questioning Brig. Gen. Carlos F. Garcia. The AFP chief returned to Manila on Friday, Thursday evening. Did he learn anything from his fellow top officials would benefit the AFP? Or was he too busy explaining to his counterparts what was happening in the AFP? Or how a number of officers would be offered a Trump Tower condominium in New York City? Ironically, if I were AFP chief, I would be embarrassed to attend any foreign conference with other military leaders while half-way breaking loose on the home front. Perhaps, Abaya felt that the scandal was just a storm in a teacup so he was hoping that things would blow over while he was away. But as President George W. Bush would taunt his Democratic opponent, Sen. John F. Kerry in their recent debates, "You can run but you can't hide."

The scandal has all the ingredients of an opportunistic investigation is, of course, Major General Garcia. It was the rank because there are other factions in the scene and we have to differentiate between the two. But if you think about it seriously, Garcia is, in a manner of speaking, a fortune teller. He hopes to be a member of the cabinet. He wants to have been chosen here and in the United States, and even his green card has been cancelled. His wealth is in present-

ron condition, and he faces prosecution and possible imprisonment. At this point, his best option is to hire a battalion of trained lawyer who will delay the legal proceedings and perhaps could drag the case indefinitely has the money for the best lawyers in town as well as the finest medical practitioners in the business. And we are a people with faint attention spans and short memories. I doubt if he is going to make court martial history by suffering the misery of people who may have been his friends since in the military making sure that he does not expand and protected. Nevertheless, one should keep in mind that Garcia could not have done what he is accused of doing, all by his lonesome.

There always held that one criminal justice system works reasonably well particularly in cases involving rape, that remember former Rep. Romeo Jalosjos, Colonel Victor Ancoso Saycon, the Cheong sisters of Cebu, the Wenceslao brothers and in the past, actress Maggie dela Riva, in fact, most of the men on death row never help killed rejection are convicted rapists. But when it comes to graft and corruption, this is where the system falters. In rape cases, there is physical evidence and personal testimony involved. In corruption cases, there are no specific victims and usually no violence; and without the political will of the state, these cases end up stone-walled. The often talk about "big fishes" being caught, but the sad truth is, when the dust gets settled, the small fry are the ones who have been convicted and in the United States, and even his green card has been cancelled. His wealth is in present-

world to circumvent the justice system.

Public outcry is the subject of most media inquiries. We should debate the desirability of the other aspect of the current crisis. There is more a dangerous leadership vacuum in the armed forces which, if left unended, could lead to grave repercussions. As in politics, whenever there is a perceived weakness in the leadership, there are groups of individuals, some well-meaning, waiting to step in to exploit the unrest and instability. The junior officers who participated in the Oakwood mutiny have been proven right. Their methods may have been wrong but their determination was right and legitimate. Obviously, the rebellion that were supposed to have been put in place because of this mutiny were useless and ineffective once the scandal which has just erupted in connection with the personal leadership. It was only when 10 General authorities brought the matter to the attention of the Ombudsman did the AFP react. Unless concrete measures are taken to address grievances in the service, there will be more Oakwood mutinies on our hands.

Former President Cory Aquino said that the single most important role of the leader is "setting an example." In any organization, the leader is the ultimate role model and the leader who sets the right example has the greatest credibility and influence among the people who work with him. Gen. Abaya, the AFP chief, is the ultimate role model in chief, President Macapagal Arroyo—perhaps the most important appointment of her young presidency—is to select the right man for the AFP leadership. He must be someone who can restore the morale of the service and turn back to the path of courage and sacrifice and not in pursuit of material benefits and comfort. He must be able to challenge the status quo and make the tough decisions which are known have to be made. He must be a man of integrity, character and leading reformer. Most important of all, he must be the ultimate role model for our men and women in uniform.

Arbet's case is GMA's 'highest priority'

AT LARGE

Nina Jimenez-David

I DID flown to Cebu Friday to take part in the multi-sectoral indignation rally protesting the murder of human rights lawyer Arbet Ian Avergonzado and demanding that his murderers as well as all the perpetrators be brought to justice at the soonest possible time.

What I didn't count on was meeting President Macapagal-Arroyo at Arbet's wake, dealing with a small group of Cebu-based women last Thursday night. Somehow, I looked forward to being by Arbet's wake and meet with his family, who understandably were devastated by his killing.

The President arrived shortly after noon that day, accompanied by among others, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez and Interior Secretary Angelo Reyes. The President stayed for nearly an hour, and in response to the plea of Arbet's family and friends that she help speed up the investigation into Arbet's killing, assured them that she was giving the case "the highest priority." As if to demonstrate her sincerity, the President then had Philippine National Police regional commander Gen. Rolando Garcia and National Bureau of Investigation regional director Reynaldo Esmeralda called to the wake.

Despite the public outcry, civil society and civil society had complained that law enforcement agencies seemed to be at loggerheads in the investigation and had been issuing conflicting statements. Lawyer Lita Corro, president of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP) Cebu Chapter, by contrast, had nothing but praise for the way the different investigating bodies and the President called on her as well for a briefing. According to those listening to the exchange, the President then "ordered" Garcia and Esmeralda to work together and to keep the public all informed about developments on the case.

The President also called Secretary Ermita and asked him to coordinate all the efforts to help Arbet's survivors, including the pledge for the burial expenses of children — Arbet, 11, Jerah, 9, and Ira, 3 — which I overheard Limasco negotiating over a cell phone. I hope all these plans push through. The response of a grateful nation for Arbet's supreme sacrifice.

* * *

THE MARCH and rally—from Fuente Osmeña

to the front of the provincial capitol—drew a only solemn and diverse crowd. From lawyers in their bar-ings and power suits, to communi-ty women in T-shirts and work clothes, the participants represented a cross-section of Cebu society. Testimony by the mother of people whom Arbet had helped through the years.

Democrito Barcenas, president of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines, Cebu City chapter, also drew cheers from the crowd when he pledged that 1000 lawyers would be present on the first day of the hearing of the provincial case against Rolmes Ecleo Jr., in which Arbet had served as private prosecutor and for which testimony by Cebu taxpayer, Arbet was to occasionally gunned down.

But the trial will have to wait awhile. The judge handling the case, Jue Rith in line, has just abolished from the case, and as the hearings will have to be raffled anew, which means the trial will have to start from scratch.

But Tess Fernandez, chair of Lilok Pilipina Foundation, noted that while the presence of a hundred lawyers taking Arbet's place in the hearings may sound like a show of powerful strategy, other lawyers will also have to take her place in other pro bono cases that she was handling before she was shot.

We can only hope that the response of Cebu's legal community to Arbet's murder has opened the eyes of lawyers in Cebu and elsewhere to the need for them to leave their "armchair issues" once in a while and bring the law to the service of those in need.

* * *

REMINDER: In observance of the ninth day of

prepare for Arbet, Pilipina, Alumni Pinay Alternative Lawyers' Group (ALG) and the Women and Gender Committee of the Association of Major Religious Superiors of the Philippines (WGC-AMRSP) and other civil society organizations will hold a Mass and memorial in memory of Arbet and other victims of brutal killings on Tuesday, Oct. 19 from 5-6 p.m. (1 a.m. on the 20th) at Philippine General Hospital Chapel, Taft Avenue, Manila, Manila.

Also on Tuesday, Oct. 19, Gabriela Women's Party, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez and Interior Secretary Angelo Reyes, among other government officials, are expected to answer the services.

Similar memorial services, as well as candlelight vigils, are also being held in other parts of the country where they have dungeons, as well as by other organizations that Arbet was part of or associated.

At Arbet's wake, I also had the privilege of personally meeting the other members of her family, especially her mother Betty. She had one request, a clarification of the impression created in the columns on Arbet's work that she was a communist. Arbet, she said, was not a member in college. "I also helped her," Mrs. Ma. Ana Ian's husband schoolmarried who chose to stay behind in their hometown of Allen, Northern Samar, even if her children had relocated to Cebu and Hong Kong.

Mrs. Ian's brother-in-law the Minnesota Solidarity Network, whose statement on Arbet's killing was cut in full in this space yesterday, was founded some years ago in the wake of the bishop slaying of the Dimaya sisters, another crime that cries to the heavens for justice, and not just after Arbet's murder. The Chicago woman strongly committed to seeking justice for their daughters. In fact, Thelma Dimaya not only helped found the Women's Solidarity for Justice, she has also become very proficient of the victims' rights group. Ursula against Violence.

The poor among us

PUBLIC LIVES

Randy David

I DON'T believe in charity. I suspect we often do it more to comfort than for those we help. I also think it takes away the urgency from the need to reform society itself. But, in practice, I have trouble ignoring those who come to me door or knock on my car window for help.

My problem is particularly with those who use only sexual their hands for alms but also take time to tell their stories. I don't like looking into the defeated eyes of these who, by begging, have surrendered every measure of their pride as human beings.

"Give no heed to time, make equal love, secure life and property," advised Emerson, "and you need not give alms. Open the doors of opportunity to talent and virtue and of course, do not freeze passion, and poverty will not be in bad hands. In a free and just commonwealth, property comes from the idle and imbecile to the industrious, brave and persevering." Emerson is right, but man has never been a just commonwealth. I refuse to believe that the poor among us have always been there by choice but industry, interest and perseverance.

I cannot forget being rebuffed by a young boy in his teens who was selling flowers' dressing stalk in the streets. "Right for a handful," he shouted. Instead of looking at me, he just made circular motions with the bouquet in his hand. "Why are you not in school?" I asked. "Because I have to earn money for my mother," he answered. Indeed, he was in a school uniform. "Sorry, I just bought some the other day," I responded with genuine regret. "But here take these," I said, offering him a couple of peso coins. He looked at me, hesitated and then said with sheer words: "Sir, I am not begging, I am selling." I felt slighted. I wanted to tell him that I meant well and that he should not be so proud. But, I checked myself: why shouldn't he be proud? As he walked away, I quietly reproached myself for having thought that he was in the streets would someday make it in the world.

Since then I have been very cautious in dealing with beggars and buggies in the streets. Whether I give or not, buy or not, I make it a point to look the person I am dealing with in the eye and, if necessary, I ask him what I can do for another human being. "The

paper that before, before I could recognize him, he shook my hand. He said he had come to inform me that his daughter had died. She needed more injections and he had been unable to raise the money to buy the expensive shots. Indeed, when he doubled, wondering how many times things like this happen in our hospitals. He had come this time to ask for some money to buy biscuits and coffee for people at the wake. For some strange reason, I instantly thought of all the billions spent during elections, the millions raised for the public debt, and the distressing state of our public hospitals.

But hugo Angelo's desperation was infectious. I suddenly felt agitated and angry. I found myself grilling him about the hospital to which he had taken his daughter, the doctor in charge of the case and so on. I asked him if he had sought the help of the Department of Social Welfare and Development, or the Philippine Charity and Sweepstakes Office. My reaction confused him. He looked at me with sad unconquerable eyes, and I read, "Sir, I am not asking for help. I am just asking for assistance. When he left, I knew I had behaved very badly. I don't remember how much I gave him. I would have given him all the money in my pocket that day, and it would not have erased the resentment of pain I had caused him.

I wish I knew what to stop being a social analyst or a political activist. The man had come seeking compassion, and I gave him a lecture and an interrogation. Too often, I think we fail to conduct ourselves as human beings because we have become so used to playing the spectator, gate keeper or the way of any basic responsibility.

Every poor man who comes to us begging for help has a story to tell. We may never know how much truth there is in those tales. But does it really matter? Is it necessary to know? We must begin to use doubt to counter, not say anything, and only learn. Levinas sums it up with this line from Dostoyevsky "We are all responsible for all and for all men before all, and more than all the others."

Comments to davidnjimenez@yahoo.com

Electoral college tie?

COMMENTARY

Belinda A. Aquino

HOUSTON—Everyone thought the 2000 US presidential election was unfair. It was not only wild but upsetting. If you were a supporter of Democratic nominee Al Gore, his were the popular vote by more than half a million, but failed to capture the electoral vote by losing Florida to Republican candidate George W. Bush, who won the Florida popular mandate by only 600 votes! And all because of the "butterfly ballot" fiasco, in which voters, especially the elderly, got confused on which side of the ballot they should be voting on. And, then

was the case of the "hanging chads" from the ballots, which made it impossible to count them as clear votes. By mugging Florida, Bush as a result won 271 electoral votes, just one vote what was needed to win, and Gore was awarded 267 votes.

Many believe that the 2004 printed election may soon be wilder, and that it might be Florida again, a major swing state, which will deliver the presidency to whoever wins its popular vote. Or probably Ohio. Or Wisconsin. It could even be Iowa. Who knows?

The race is too tight and has been swinging wildly after every major event, especially the presidential debates. Before the debates, Bush, enjoying a "bounce" from the Republican Convention in New York, was ahead of John Kerry by some 4-6 percent. After the second debate, it became a dead heat 46-46 in favor of Kerry. After the third debate, the pundits called the contest "a point to the finish."

The pre-debates calculation was that Bush was leading in the electoral votes race, which he took to Election Day and still are, at this writing, short of the magic 270 electoral votes needed to win. Bush has 217 votes from 25 states, according to an analysis by Ken Rudin of Internet and Print, based on state-by-state polls and interviews with political strategists across the country. Kerry, on the other hand, has 14 states and the District of Columbia in his column for a total of 253 votes, thus trailing Bush but not by much.

So, according to the AP analysis, the 11 states considered the "swing states," which have a combined total of 128 votes, will spell the margin of victory. Whoever wins the popular vote in those states will automatically get the electoral college votes in a winner-take-all scheme.

Of these 11, Florida, Ohio, Iowa, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Wisconsin, Michigan and West Virginia are the toughest battleground states. If Kerry retains or wresting at 264 electoral votes, he needs another 77 to win. That's why he needs to win the undisputed of the swing states with relatively more electoral votes—Ohio, Florida, Wisconsin, Michigan and Iowa.

But, never-ding-to-Bonnie, Kerry's best prospects may be in the Midwest. Gore won by Bush in 2000: Ohio, Florida, Nevada, New Hampshire and West Virginia. Ohio, which has 20 electoral votes, and Florida with 27 are "must win" states for either Bush or Kerry, but especially Kerry. However, Florida is probably going in the Bush camp if only because his brother is the governor there. Bush has also earned the state more than 20 times, as he is supposed to have a lot of support in the state in the 2000 election, but the the state's lagging economy makes it a toss-up.

Kerry has strategized his campaign to woo Republican-leaning North Carolina by choosing the state's US Sen. John Edwards as his running mate. North Carolina is not easily considered a "swing state," but both camps are not ignoring its 15 electoral votes, not insignificant in a close race. Bush campaigned there last Thursday.

What if there's a tie in the electoral vote: Bush 269 and Kerry 269? It is highly unlikely but not impossible. Political science professor Larry Sabato at the University of Virginia says, "Look, 269 to 269 is far from absurd." He mentions, "There could be a Bush-Edwards incoming administration." Really now, isn't that even more absurd?

This scenario is not unprecedented—this electoral college tie. In 1800, the US House of Representatives took 36 votes in order to close between Thomas Jefferson and Aaron Burr by making Jefferson president. "You can bet an accident that Bush-Edwards victory would quickly turn the two presidency from powerful to puny," Sabato adds.

In case of a 2004 electoral college draw, the new House of Representatives, which will be elected in November, will elect the president by majority vote, with each state's House delegation getting one vote. The US Senate would elect the new vice president by majority vote, with each senator getting one vote. The bottom line in this deadlocked scenario is that, if the Democrats gain two Senate seats in this year's elections, the body could pick Edwards, of course—not Dick Cheney, the Republican vice presidential candidate.

In order for Bush to win the House votes in a Democratic majority Kerry would be chosen president. And if the Republicans get a Senate majority, Cheney could get chosen vice president. Either combination still really be wild.

Again, such a scenario is certainly not impossible, but wild if it happens. Interesting, isn't it? You might ask, as I've often asked, why don't they just abolish the electoral college and simplify everything? Well, I'm asking the people who elect presidents, I confuses people, and so on. Easier said than done. It's like asking a very religious person not to believe in God anymore. You cannot just time out a great political tradition. It might have outlived its usefulness in ensuring fairness in elections, but it has become a hallowed tradition in the last 200 years.

Bush will probably come by that change because the majority of young people, Americans at that, don't even understand this electoral college system. I have great difficulty making my students over the years understand the logic behind it. The state of Colorado is trying to change the formula for the electoral vote distribution based on the popular vote totals, not winner-take-all, in a proposed referendum.

In the end, it's probably the 3 percent so-called "undecided-uh-uh election day" who will deliver the magic number. Many veteran pollsters have indicated that a full 5 percent of voters who intend to vote make up their minds only when they reach their polling booths. Apparently, there's another estimated 5 percent who make up their minds only during the last few days of the campaign. In the end, you second race with no clear winner in sight. It's only a matter of a few precious days, if not right down the wire, that we will know.

Belinda A. Aquino is professor of Political Science and Asian Studies at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa where she is also director of the Center for Philippine Studies.

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TALK *of the* TOWN

Please send feedback to:
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Editor Juan F. Santamaria Jr.

Food for all: Can we achieve it? (2)

REACTING to the article "Hunger stalks the country's food basket" in last week's issue of Talk of the Town, a group has proposed a plan to eradicate in 10 years rural poverty in Mindanao where about a quarter of households have been found to suffer from hunger.

Kusanyagan Mindanao Foundation, Inc. (KFI) disagrees with the claim of Alternative Forum for Research in Mindanao (AFRIM) that the drive of agribusiness to produce cash crops like bananas, pineapple and palm oil for the export market has contributed to poverty and chronic hunger on the island.

KFI identifies low productivity in rice, corn and coconut lands as the main cause of poverty in rural households.

Defending agribusiness as perceived by the multinational forest Dole and Del Monte to six million hectares of agricultural land and applying the strategy to coffee, rubber, mango, native bananas, vegetables, soya beans, livestock, dairy and cotton could wipe out poverty, according to the foundation.

In its riposte, AFRIM says that the problems with agribusiness is that everything is placed in the control of the transnational corporations and the big Filipino companies, which appropriate the profits.

Not mentioned in the debate is the fact that agribusiness promotes monocropping that is heavily dependent on costly chemical fertilizers, pesticides and machinery. Monocropping also relies on the extensive use of energy, especially oil.

Increases in productivity have come at a huge cost—soil erosion, pollution, elimination of the family farm, concentration of land, among others. In addition, studies have shown that Western-style agriculture is not sustainable.

Agribusiness can wipe out rural poverty

By Sherra A. Malonzo

As a local Mindanaoan, I am troubled with the ill-informed analysis of writers in his or their "Hunger stalks the country's food basket" in Talk of the Town on Oct. 10, referring to agribusiness as a culprit of the population from below the poverty line and go to deep starving half the rest.

I also agree with his conclusion that government, rather than giving out food coupons to solve mass hunger, should take a country-go approach by harnessing the power present and re-examining its agricultural policies.

But I disagree with the analysis of Dela Rosa, executive director of AFRIM, that the cause of widespread poverty is "export-oriented agribusiness strategy". In the contrary, it's the absence of a well-rounded agribusiness strategy that addresses basic national and global markets, that is the bane of agriculture. Most of the country's agriculture and forestry lands are still in a subsistence mode of development.

It is not clear, though, what Dela Rosa is objecting to in the export-driven distribution of crops, or their being high-value crops, or the involvement of big agribusiness. Or is it the whole agribusiness strategy? He singles out "pineapple, bananas, oil palm and other high-value crops" as prime examples of the glorious export-oriented agribusiness doomed to food crops such as rice with their high-value crops.

What, in fact, is the impact of these crops on Mindanao's landscape and economy? Out of six million hectares of agricultural lands, commercial pineapple and bananas for export take up only 70,000 hectares. In 2003, 30,000 hectares of pineapple plantations made $146 million in export earnings equivalent to P257,000 per hectare. In the same year, 40,000 hectares planted to export banana earned $245 million equivalent to P233,000 per hectare.

In comparison, irrigated rice lands yield an average of 4,000 kilos of palay per hectare valued at P40,000. Irrigated and rain-fed rice lands total a million hectares with the latest having lower yields. Mindanao has 2 million of the country's 3.5 million hectares of coconut lands that yield an average of one ton of copra per hectare per year in the current price of P20 per kilo, this amounts to 20,000 per hectare yearly. Likewise, Mindanao has a million hectares planted to corn with an average yield of 3.5 tons per hectare per year valued at P70,000 per hectare.

Rice, corn and coconut lands in Mindanao total 4 million hectares with an average annual yield of P15,000 per hectare. With an average of 3.5 hectares, a farming household's gross income amounts to P52,500 yearly, or a low of P14,583 half of which goes to production costs. Add P20,000 from other income sources, thus raising the farming household income to P66,583, which is half of the poverty line of P70,000.

Main cause of poverty

Low productivity of soils, inputs and other farmlands is the main cause of poverty in rural households.

On the other hand, 30,000 hectares of pineapple and bananas easily create 200,000 jobs, of which 70,000 are in direct employment and the remainder, in multiplier effects, in transportation, marketing and manufacturing requirements of the plantations. Benefits and workers' remunerations (e.g. education, medication, shops). The 70,000 workers directly employed as workers in banana and pineapple plantations earn twice the average minimum daily mandated wage. This does not include the income of landowners most of whom are agrarian reform beneficiaries.

Dela Rosa and Monterde's own single piece of agricultural land: Dole leases 4,000 hectares from BARBCI (Dole Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Cooperative, Inc.), which also manages a 200 hectare pineapple plantation for export and sells its produce to Dole. Dole also engages in pineapple growing covering 3,000 hectares of small farmlands that are consolidated farms managed by cooperatives. The yield of competitive growers in Dole equals, if not exceed, the average yield of plantations directly managed by Dole.

Del Monte, on the other hand, leases 4,000 hectares from DASRICI (Del Monte Employees Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Cooperative, Inc.) and leases the rest from other small landowners.

Dole-Southern Bukidnon plantations in Davao have all been covered by agrarian reform and are now under processing agreements between Dole-Stanfilco and beneficiaries-turned-growers. Former plantation workers turned beneficiaries own an average of not more than nine hectares. Many benefit-ciaries own more than 10 hectares, earning P400,000 a year in net income from a harvest of fruit, excluding wages of dairy stock.

Unbiased?

Let's turn to palm oil. We have only 20,000 hectares of oil palm plantations categorized true: 31,000 hectares fruit-bearing and 3,000 hectares of immature trees. The productive 31,000 hectares generate 58 tons of crude palm oil and palm kernel oil yearly valued at $23 million. These are refined into cooking oil and re-exported locally, netting only earning $20 million in exports.

Still we import 150,000 tons of palm oil and its products worth nearly $75 million. A sound agricultural economic initiative for the country, in fact, imports twice its exports. By this reckoning, we need 150,000 hectares of oil palm plantations today to save $150 million in imports.

Why do we import palm oil instead of consuming our own excess? The reason is that our excess oil is more expensive than that sold by 20 percent on the world market. Fast food chains and food manufacturers prefer to use the cheaper palm oil.

What if the government halved its fresh food list palm oil and made the import of coconut oil? Seventy percent of coco oil is now exported. The price of copra will plunge to $5 a kilo, giving the farmer a gross income of P1,000 per hectare a year. Farmers will not harvest their coconuts at this price. They would rather use their coco for sale as coco lumber but there will be no buyers for this volume of coco wood.

Should President Macapagal-Arroyo follow Dr. Ira Buan's (by-)opinion of local fruit and ban to coco oil exports, the 2 million hectares of coconut lands, presently fairly fruit 3.5 million hectares of coconut lands (2.1 million of which are in Mindanao) in protest and trade calling Congress and the Supreme Court will not be opposed to farmers' wrath.

Expand agribusiness

I submit that the problems of Mindanao's widespread poverty and hunger are not caused by agribusiness strategy instead we should expand the application of Dole and Del Monte's agribusiness strategy for the 4 million hectares of agricultural lands, most of which are marginal and unproductive. Contrary to popular perception, agribusiness strategy can be applied to small farms as well as to corporate estates.

By applying federal agricultural technology employed by Bukidnon farmers to an 80,000 hectares of corn lands, we can easily raise the yield to four tons per hectare with four million tons of corn in Mindanao, we will have enough corn to cover the deficit of one million tons that we import yearly for animal feeds. (Corn is not edible raw but is cooked).

Market solutions

By planting the Philippine Coconut Authority "rational" (opinion-ated) farmers from entering coconut lands and by following its fertilization and maintenance protocols, coconut will yield four tons of copra per year. We can supply all the world's requirements of coco oil, if we get their markets' cooperation to pay export-priced products such as shampoo, soap, lotion and facial cream, not to mention the mercurium-free virgin oil, the Philippines can be the biggest coconut palm farm. It's up to us to do it.

The same agribusiness strategy can be applied to coffee, rubber, mango, native bananas (bardaba, saba), vegetables, soya beans, livestock, dairy and cotton could wipe out poverty, according to the foundation.

In its riposte, Afrim says that the problems with agribusiness is that everything is placed in the control of the transnational corporations and the big Filipino companies, which appropriate the profits.

Not mentioned in the debate is the fact that agribusiness promotes monocropping that is heavily dependent on costly chemical fertilizers, pesticides and machinery. Monocropping also relies on the extensive use of energy, especially oil.

Increases in productivity have come at a huge cost—soil erosion, pollution, elimination of the family farm, concentration of land, among others. In addition, studies have shown that Western-style agriculture is not sustainable.

RP's top food imports and exports (in million US dollars)

Imports	2001	2002	2003
Wheat	427	497	598
Dairy products	426	391	390
Rice	107	215	155
Fruits and vegetables	122	157	101
Corn	78	46	30
Exports			
Coconut oil	418	353	408
Bananas (fresh)	280	209	222
Fish, fresh and preserve	287	298	291
Shrimps and prawns	124	138	131
Canned pineapple	91	82	74

Corporate farming won't ease hunger in Mindanao

By Billy de la Rosa

The anti-agribusiness campaigns and agribusiness strategies, if made by the rest spearheaded by government and the landless international committee in Mindanao haven't produced positive results in lifting the poor out of poverty and hunger in Mindanao. The hope that this is not the case being debunked by Sherra Malonzo, I hope. I'm right to think that he is not saying that poverty and hunger in Mindanao are due to the fact that there is not enough of the kind of agribusiness that is even being promoted in the country's food basket.

If one goes by the numbers that he presents, agribusiness is indeed the way to go. But there is little to no success in the transnational and Filipino-agribusiness companies are the ones who appropriate the profits. Policy makers and professional organizations should be more vocal in the rights of the small farmer in agribusiness contracts. This was what I was referring to when I said that the promised prosperity in agribusiness had not been realized for many Mindanaoans despite the untold wealth that was created by agribusiness.

Leasehold arrangement

The land-tenure problem had been cited by agribusiness companies to justify their anti-agrarian reform position. They say that agrarian reform will not help the economies-of-scale of plantations. To circumvent the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP), companies like Dole and Del Monte leased out the landlock schemes in which plantations covered by CARP were immediately leased back to the company for extended periods—some up to 50 years—as attorneys they would make the land payments upon payment.

Malonzo mentions the oil palm plantation in Agusan as guilty of this and goes on to admit that plantation arrangement governing it. The plantations are among the most ethical of contracts. Again, we say that some practices do not respect the rights of the small farmer in agribusiness contracts. This was what I was referring to when I said that there is productivity and investment.

But these practices can precisely when heavy Mindanao and its people panic. And this is precisely the kind of agribusiness being promoted by the Arroyo administration in the name of promoting the food basket policy. I hope this by challenging President Macapagal-Arroyo to back up her words with deeds, Malonzo does not mean her to do a disservice by deceiving huge areas of land under government ownership and leading some to agribusiness companies... Filipino or foreign—just like what he did for oil palm in Agusan and Bukidnon in Davao del Sur.

Company control

I agree with Malonzo who does to an urgent need to re-examine agricultural policy for Mindanao. There is nothing wrong with investment incentives and value additions as he defines it in the article. The questions is, who controls and who benefits from agribusiness? What is wrong with the agribusiness scheme as it is currently implemented is that everything is planned in the interest of the companies—the same ones that had been notorious for their anti-people practices, which oftentimes bring the nation more trouble to her economies.

The Philippines should develop an agro-industrial power that observes its own needs, and not one that follows (gets gain) what companies from other countries want us to do.

Take the case of the administration's oil palm plantation promotion program. Palm oil is not a low quality vegetable oil, which was described by some industry experts to confine to commercial consumption field of automobile to refine and smell. But, because of the effort and resources which Malaysia put in research and development, it is now the world's premier traded oil.

Within a few short decades, it has overtaken by leaps and bounds the Philippines' income oil to importance in the global markets of vegetable oils. Because it pioneered in palm oil research and development, Malaysia now stands as the world's palm oil king, controlling its technology and markets. Now, to companies are promoting the development of oil palm plantations in countries with similar climate as a strategy to take it the dominant oil would be the ones who control the technology and the markets.

What Malaysian needs is to appropriate its own needs, and not one that follows (gets gain) what companies from other countries want us to do.

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Within a few short decades, it has overtaken by leaps and bounds the Philippines' income oil to importance in the global markets of vegetable oils. Because it pioneered in palm oil research and development, Malaysia now stands as the world's palm oil king, controlling its technology and markets. Now, to companies

Sherra A. Malonzo is the president of Kusanyagan Mindanao Foundation, Inc. (KFI), a non-profit, non-stock, non-sectarian group advocating agrarian reform and rural development. KFI supports all agrarian reform and farming activities with Agusan Milling Corp., which produces palm oil in Bunawan, Agusan del Sur as well as with Mindanao Grains Corp. in Agdao, Bukidnon and with Dole Philippines in Polomolok, South Cotabato.

Billy de la Rosa is executive director of the Mindanao Forum for Research in Mindanao (AFRIM), a research and advocacy organization based in Davao City.

Across the NATION

Basilan sheds off its image as Abu-Sayyaf ravaged island

MAGINO, Basilan—U.S. Ambassador to the Philippines Francis Ricciardone noted the transformation of this province from an Abu Sayyaf-ravaged island to a growing economic hub in Mindanao.

"From the looks of it, Basilan is transformed. That's what we have hoped, a combination of development assistance, working with the local government units, governmental agencies, non-governmental organizations and with the wise work of the AFP that judiciously used their force against the bad elements," Ricciardone told reporters here Wednesday.

The US ambassador visited Muhun town where a port improvement is being implemented by the Growth Equity in Mindanao (GEM) with USAID funding.

"The economy is coming up. People like there are more roads to connect the islands, to connect the economy and the people-to-people," he said.

Carlos Sun, the GEM's deputy program manager on infrastructure, said the business that these projects are located mostly on conflict affected areas in Mindanao, particularly in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).

With assistance, the USAID administration said Basilan has the biggest share of GEM-USAID community level projects in Mindanao. Of the 700 projects identified and accomplished, Basilan got 200.

"We are here to emphasize this pledge and help to the Philippine government and help them to achieve peace," Ricciardone said.

Gov. Wahab Akbar said the province has placed 14th nationwide for revenue collection this year.

"We have been tagged before as the 20th poorest province in the country. Now we are earning and growing," Akbar said.

ARMM Gov. Parouk Hussin also said that ARMM, known for its negative image as the "land to violence, is now a land of opportunities."

RICCIARDONE, with Gov. Wahab Akbar (center), visits Basilan which he described as a most improved province.

Execs hit delay in taxes by dam owner

BOROMBONG, Sharon Vinoya—Local officials lamented the delay in the payment of taxes and other fees by the operator of the Cassecnan Multi-Purpose Irrigation and Power Project in Barangay Cantabaco town.

Lawyer Epifanio Galima Jr., provincial legal consultant, and communities that host the CMIPP have yet to receive notices from the project, three years after its completion in 2001.

Legal questions have since prevented the provincial government, the Aliguay Cantabaco government and local villages to receive payoffs at least a commitment of the CMIPP in the form of national wealth share, and real property, franchise and business taxes, Galima said.

"It's quite sad because we are now faced with these obstacles. While the [for three years], many people could have benefited if only these [taxes] were paid obligations," he said.

The CMIPP is a 140-million cement and irrigation project of the Australian firm Caliburn Sinclair (CS) Cassecnan, which was built through a 22-year build-operate-transfer deal with the government in 1995.

It was intended to provide irrigation to 30,000 hectares of rice lands in Central Luzon, and to generate 140 megawatts of electricity for the Luzon energy grid.

The entire project site consists of a 132-meter high concrete dam in Barangay Pelaway in Alfonso Castañeda, which diverts water from how the Cassecnan and Taan rivers through a 30-km tunnel across the Nueva Vizcaya-Nueva Ecija border, and to the power plant in Barangay Villarica in Pantabangan, Nueva Ecija.

According to Galima, the province's claim for the collection of the national wealth share emanated from the mandate of providing balance the regional tax code here.

The provincial government has asked the court to declare the province as host community, citing provisions of the local government code and the Omnibus Power Industry Reform Act (Epira) of 2001.

Gov. Luisa Llamas Cuneconta said she was optimistic that once the legal issues were resolved, Cabarroguis would pay its obligations, although she refused to say how. Vice Mayor Conrado Cunningham, Cabarroguis general manager Melvin Soriano, PIO Kathleen Lucas Bacuno.

26 employees of water agency sacked for joining rally

By Joey A. Gabieza
The Visayan Bureau

TACLOBAN CITY—The Leyte Metropolitan Water District (LMWD) has dismissed its 26 employees and suspended two others for joining a rally in February staged by militant groups against the managements.

The employees, who held various positions at the LMWD, received the termination and suspension orders on Tuesday afternoon, an hour before they were about to go home.

Eight union members of the Confederation for Unity, Recognition and Advancement of Government Employees (Courage) Kaisahan ng Manggagawa sa Pamahalaan ng Pilipinas, a militant organization composed of government employees.

Ricky Palomin, Courage union secretary general in Eastern Visayas, and one of those sacked by LMWD, said they were shocked when they received the order from management.

"The notice of suspension and termination was served to us without due notice," he told the bureau, adding that it was "arbitrary and a violation of their rights to peaceably assembly."

The group tried to report for work yesterday morning but was barred from entering the LMWD office.

Aside from Palomin, dismissed were Glenn Ishiwa, Roberto Asis, Benjamin Badilla, Armando Baino, Jorge Baino, Arsenio Bitone, Conrado Cuido, Reynaldo Cariaga, Renato Dael, Bernardo Devorsa, Ellen Francisco, Nilo Ilonzo, Angel Lardizo, Tomas Macapinlac, Beryl Makalintal, Rolando Mercado, Alfonso Modesto, Virgilio Nolasco, Gerardo Perez, Rudrigo Quimbo, Jorge Roaf, Raul Sevilla, Lorito Suarez, Pedro Sirata and Reynaldo Yebbas.

Antonio Mercado and Reynaldo Jallao were suspended after the 11 cases committee that conducted the investigation gave weight to their claim that they just joined the group and did not even know what the rally was all about.

Lawyer Vicente Opinion, LEPRD legal consultant, said their suspension may range from one to six months, depending on the discretion of LMWD manager Reynaldo Feliciano.

The order stemmed from the rally staged by some militant groups in Tacloban on Feb. 5 at the LMWD main office on Mabini Street here, questioning the plan of LMWD to increase its water rates by 10 percent.

The adjustment are implemented in June, which affected the LMWD's more than 25,000 concessionaires covering the towns of Palo, Tanauan, Tegum, Dulag, Tolosa and the city.

During the rally, the protesters also demanded the ouster of Feliciano whom they accused of mismanagement, an allegation which he strongly denied.

But Palomin told the bureau that they joined the rally to demand the release of their uniform allowance, which had not been released since 1981.

The allowance ranges from P1,000 to P4,000, depending on the position of the employee.

But LMWD assistant manager Eulalio Madronero said the decision against 28 employees was not done in haste because a committee was formed to study what particular action be meted on them.

PHILIPPINE INTERNATIONAL TRADING CORPORATION

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY

The Philippine International Trading Corporation (PITC) invites interested parties to apply for eligibility and submit proposal for the following project:

NATIONWIDE MARKETING & DISTRIBUTION OF PHARMACEUTICAL PRODUCTS

Applicants must meet all the following qualifications:

1. Licensed BFAD Drug Importer and Drug Distributor
2. Experience and performance in the pharmaceutical industry (multinational & local companies)
3. Must at least three years experience in nationwide multinational and local pharmaceutical distribution
4. Has a wide network of drugstores/grocers nationwide
5. Capable of managing/supporting retail outlets nationwide
6. Computerization including financial/inventory management systems
7. With laboratory/laboratory capabilities
8. Sound training modules (pharmacists, healthcare assistants, etc.)

Eligibility forms shall be available and may be secured from October 18 to October 29, 2004 at the PITC-NDC Secretariat Unit 606, North B Mezzanine Floor, NDC Building, 116 Tordesillas St., Salcedo Village, Makati City or upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P500.00.

Interested parties shall submit on or before 3:00 PM October 29, 2004 their Letter of Intent, Proposal, Eligibility forms together with required documents in a sealed envelope addressed to:

MR/DOMINIE MARKETING & DISTRIBUTION OF PHARMACEUTICAL PRODUCTS
c/o PITC BIDS & AWARDS COMMITTEE
6th Floor NDC Building,
116 Tordesillas St. Salcedo Village, Makati City

Eligible parties shall be required to make a brief presentation (LPT) on their capabilities and proposal.

PITC RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL PROPOSALS WITHOUT OFFERING ANY REASON, WAIVE ANY REQUIRED FORMALITIES IN THE OFFERS RECEIVED AND MAKE AN AWARD TO THE PARTY WHOSE PROPOSAL IS MOST ADVANTAGEOUS TO PITC.

(Sgd.) MARLENE B. LOPEZ
Bids Chairman

BAR

Republic of the Philippines
Province of Zamboanga
del Sur
Local Agrarian Reform Communities Development Project (LARCDP II)

INVITATION TO RE-BID

October 17, 2004
Bank Reference Date: 1 Feb PM

The Government of the Philippines has received a loan from International Bank for Reconstruction and Development towards the cost of the LARCDP II and intends to apply part of the funds to cover eligible payments under the following contract: Construction of Level III Potable Water Systems at the Cluster Three Project Area, Zamboanga. The Barangay Local Government Units (LGUs) of Lubungan, Kumalarang, Lakewood, Pitogo, Dimataling, Dinas, Dumalinao, Dumingag, Josefina, Tukuran, Midsalip, Molave, Ramon Magsaysay, San Miguel, San Pablo, Tabina, Tambulig, Tigbao, Tuburan, Vincenzo A. Sagun, Zamboanga City, Zamboanga del Sur, Zamboanga Sibugay and Zamboanga Sibugay invites eligible bidders for the following:

Project Location: Cluster Three Project Area
Estimated Approved Budget for the Contract: PHP 15,000,000.00
Bid Security: PHP 150,000.00
Bid Closing Date: November 15, 2004 Time 10:00 A.M.

Description of Works

Item No.	Description of Works	Quantity	Unit
100	Clearing and Grubbing	12,000.00	sq.m.
101	Excavation for Structures	1,000.00	cu.m.
102	Embankment for Structures	2,000.00	cu.m.
103	Aggregate Sub-base Course	1,000.00	cu.m.
104	Aggregate Base Course	1,000.00	cu.m.
105	Asphalt Pavement	1,000.00	cu.m.
106.01	Installation of PVC Pipe, dia. 50mm	50.00	cu.m.
106.02	Installation of PVC Pipe, dia. 100mm	50.00	cu.m.
106.03	Installation of PVC Pipe, dia. 150mm	50.00	cu.m.
107	Concrete Pipe	1,000.00	cu.m.

Minimum Equipment Required

Bulldozer D 6 with minimum Blade Power Variable Component Drum Unit, 1 unit Concrete Mixer Diesel or Gasoline Engine 7 cu.m. capacity, 1 unit Dump Truck 4 cubic meters capacity, 1 unit Vibrating Plate Compactor, 1 unit Concrete Vibrator, 1 unit Backhoe, 1 unit Generator Set, 1 unit Water Pump, 1 unit

A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by the interested bidders at the LGU Treasurer's Office of the Municipality of Dr. Jose Rizal or the Contractors Building Section, Room 101, Municipal Building, Dr. Jose Rizal, Zamboanga del Sur, upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P1,000.00 for each set. Payment will be made in cash or in the form of a manager's check or bank draft.

Bids shall be submitted on or before 2:00 PM of the bidding date and shall be accompanied by a Bid Security (Special Bid) for P150,000.00 in Cash, Cashier's/Manager's Check, Bank Draft/Guarantee or Irrevocable Letter of Credit issued by a Universal or Commercial Bank. Bidders shall submit their bids to the LGU Treasurer's Office, Municipality of Dr. Jose Rizal, Zamboanga del Sur, or mail to the Municipal Treasurer's Office, Municipality of Dr. Jose Rizal, Zamboanga del Sur, on or before the bidding date and time at 10:00 A.M. or before the bids will be opened in the presence of the bidders who wish to attend.

The LGU-DR.J. ARCHIVES of the Municipality reserves the right reject any or all bids, waive any defect in technicality, accept or to disregard informalities or irregularities thereof, or to accept bids which in the judgment of the Municipality will be most advantageous to the government without assigning any reason whatsoever.

(Sgd.) EVELYN B. ARCHIVES
Chairman, LGU DR.J. ARCHIVES

BAR

Republic of the Philippines
Province of San Antonio
Municipality of [illegible]

Local Agrarian Reform Communities Development Project (LARCDP II)

INVITATION TO RE-BID
(ITB)

October 17, 2004
Bank Reference Date: 1 Feb PM

The Government of the Philippines has received a loan from International Bank for Reconstruction and Development towards the cost of the LARCDP II and intends to apply part of the funds to cover eligible payments under the following contract: Construction of Level III Potable Water Systems at the Cluster Three Project Area, Zamboanga. The Barangay Local Government Units (LGUs) of Lubungan, Kumalarang, Lakewood, Pitogo, Dimataling, Dinas, Dumalinao, Dumingag, Josefina, Tukuran, Midsalip, Molave, Ramon Magsaysay, San Miguel, San Pablo, Tabina, Tambulig, Tigbao, Tuburan, Vincenzo A. Sagun, Zamboanga City, Zamboanga del Sur, Zamboanga Sibugay and Zamboanga Sibugay invites eligible bidders for the following:

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(Sgd.) EVELYN B. ARCHIVES
Chairman, LGU DR.J. ARCHIVES

INQUIRER Mindanao

The road to Sultan Naga Dimaporo

THE P500-MILLION new regional road network that will connect Zamboanga del Sur and Lanao del Sur provinces is linking the quiet villages buried in the mountains of Lanao

By Ryan D. Rosauro
Sultan Naga Dimaporo, Lanao del Norte

LARGE trucks of army of excavation tractors rumble along Pitoin village, breaking a mundane early morning scene characterized by an occasional flight and chirping of farm birds amid a vast green landscape of rice fields interspersed with coconut trees.

The workers are on their way to a road clearing site, the frontier of the future for enhanced socioeconomic integration in this part of Mindanao. The concrete-and-tar roads produce a regional road network stretching some 22 kilometers from Sultan Gumander town in Lanao del Sur to Tukuran town in Zamboanga del Sur. Another 25 to 30 kilometer road that connects to Kapatagan town in Lanao del Norte is also being rehabilitated.

Construction work had commenced for some months now with several kilometers of paved over by already completed.

Amounting to some P500 million, the project funded by the Kuwaiti government is expected to provide a physical link between the economies of central, northern and western Mindanao regions. For travelers from northwestern Mindanao, the road adds an alternative land route to Cotabato City apart from the Maramag-Kumon-Kiglabong route Munaser City.

At the center of this unfolding development is this relatively remote town of Sultan Naga Dimaporo in the southern tip of Lanao del Norte province, with practically the entire road network passing through it. Hence, as work on the road progresses, opening in isolated villages to the mainstream economy and ushering unknown to most modernization is also creeping on the town.

In the recent past, the way to interact and outlying villages was a narrow strip of rugged dirt road that drowns in flood during the rainy season.

And although just some such where the coastal villages could be reached boat through a barren side because the road is in very bad shape, according to provincial administrator Jesus Tobio.

"Amid poor road conditions, transport of farm produce in the town center is primarily done on the backback," a farmer related as he prepared to go home in a bicycle, a mode of transport previously unconceivable in the village.

Tourism

In the dried [illegible] municipal tourism officer, said that as the town emerges out of social and physical isolation, she hoped its tourism potentials would be discovered and developed as synergy for local economic growth, on top of its marine riches, notably lobsters or yellow fin tuna.

She pointed to several kilometers of coastal areas by that have not been developed yet but are potential for resort, and a host of sea cliffs ideal for diving like the one with an estimated depth of over a hundred feet. Of interest to local visitors presently is a brook in Pilindaong village.

Towards Sultan Gumander town some 35 kilometers southeast, travelers have to pass on the "the tunnel." It is a 20-meter long passage carved out of a boulder by controlled blasting to give way to large trucks hauling logs and farm products. It is a construction done during the time it was built just after the Second World War.

Already there is increased flow of people and goods coming in and through town with some ten formative PE vans plying the route Kapatagan to Malabang in Lanao del Sur, reducing travel time by almost half. Previously, individuals outlaw king on this trip had to take a 45-minute jeepney ride from Kapatagan going into their board an outrigger boat for a sea ride that takes almost two hours to Malabang.

Town native Allan Sumida, an educator, said the negative perception by outsiders about the town is unfair and needs to be corrected.

He lamented that a great treasure is an industrial bounty in Mindanao should it be viewed as some sort of an [illegible] "where in fact it is a sanctuary of understanding between Muslim and Christian inhabitants."

Mayor Mandilo Dimaporo said he expected the road to also spur the potential for [illegible] culture, hence boosting law enforcement drive.

Apart from the road, another prominent mark of modernization are two cell sites now erecting about town, respectively owned by Globe Telecom and Smart Communications.

This is spawning the growth in ownership of individuals, especially youngsters brandishing mobile phones, their platform for linking to the rest of the country and the world.

Locally known by its acronym SNB, the town is composed of 37 barangays, 36 of which are coastal villages facing the waterspew Illana Bay.

Created in 1950 as the mission town, it was renamed in 1992 in honor of the late Sultan Naga Dimaporo who once served as the town's chief executive.

MOBILE phone service became available in the town just two months ago, providing a link for the runners and isolated locality in the southern tip of Lanao del Norte province to the world beyond.

HANDS ON MANILA FOUNDATION, INC

and

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

invite you to a day of fun and exciting treats as we celebrate VOLUNTEERISM.

VIP DAY2004

VOLUNTEER IN PERSON

WHEN:
OCTOBER 24, 2004

WHERE:
NBC TENT

FEATURED GAMES:
- Velcro wall
- Giant slide

Schedule of Activities

8 AM - Registration
9 AM - Mass
10 AM - Community Games
12 NN - Lunch/Start of Silent Auction
1230 PM - Best Student Volunteers Fashion Show directed by Ariel Lozada
2 PM - Badminton Clinic by Weena Lim
4 PM - Live Auction
6 PM - VIP Socials

PLEDGE YOUR VOLUNTEER HOURS FOR THE FOLLOWING AUCTION ITEMS:

- 40 G iPod
- Cellphone
- A photo shoot with Raymund Isaac
- A styling session with Jenni Epperson
- A tour of MTV with Sarah Meier
- Trip for two to Boracay
- Karaoke session for 10 with Vina Morales
- Private movie party for 50 at myCinema
- Laptop

Give a BIG HAND to the following for giving VOLUNTEERISM a hand UP! Eon Inc. (the Corporate Communications Network), Bench, kiddieparty.com, Themeworks, Mirant, First Gen, Asian Spirit, Boracay 357, True Value, Digital Exchange, The NBC Tent, Wave 89.1, Jam 88.3 and Joey 92.3.

SAN FERNANDO TRAGEDY

4 execs face raps for deadly fire

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Pampanga Provincial Fire Prosecutor's office will have been recommended for suspension following the fire that killed eight workers of a supermarket here.

Senior Insp. Ruben Rivera, BFP Central Luzon director, confirmed to this newsman on Friday the 90-day preventive suspension of Chief Insp. Johnny Catindat, former city fire marshal; SPO2 Danilo Rodriguez, former chief fire inspector; SPO1 Jose Antonio Santana, who replaced Rodriguez; and SPO2 Renato David, chief fire investigator.

Rivera said the BFP's task force formed to investigate the fire that gutted the Pepsteng's Sunrise Mart here made the recommendation regarding the possible filing of administrative cases against the four.

According to him, the four BFP officials issued illegal/falsified certificates like Fire Safety Inspection Certificate for their Feb. 6, 2004 business permit despite several violations of fire safety standards.

Rivera said the inspection law was last inspected on December 2003.

Catindat and Rodriguez had been moved to other assignments and could not be reached for comment. David, who as chief fire inspector, signed a certification issued for the Chief concerned on April 4, 1997.

Numerous specifications in the plan were violated, among those the construction of the fourth floor when the eight workers were trapped and burned to death, documents obtained by the inspection showed.

The last room on the floor did not also have a fire exit and an escape ladder. The windows, sealed by metal grills, were padlocked. In the plan, the owners specified "sliding glass window with aluminum frame."

David could not be reached for comment. Instead said he was appointed by the recommendation, saying he took over Rodriguez's post only in July.

Both the BFP and the city government's business office claimed to have not received a copy of the 2004 fire inspection certificate. The BFP claimed it lost its documents when the office was rebuilt last year.

An official of the city government's Business Zone Bldg. Team (BZBT) confirmed that the certificate was among the documents that the Chief submitted. Former Mayor Reynaldo Aquino approved the couple's business permit.

The surreptitability of higher BFP officials would be known when the city government announces the findings of its own investigating panel next week. Mayor Oscar Rodriguez said. Imelda Dreijas, PDI Central Luzon Desk

BURNING RIDE
A girl appears to be bored in circa based for Catchin, Aklan from bale. The trip takes 45 hours.

Payumo on leaving Subic: 'Another door opens . . .'

By Allan Macatuno
PDI Central Luzon Desk

SUBIC BAY FREEPORT ZONE— Outgoing Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority Chair Felicito Payumo on Friday said he had no regrets in leaving the government agency he had served the longest.

"I have learned about loving go . . . When one door closes, another one opens. I am happy about leaving because I know that I have found a family here in Subic," Payumo said during the thanksgiving party prepared for him by SBMA officials and employees on Friday, his last day in office.

President Macapagal-Arroyo has appointed Feliciano Gonzales III, former president of Ayala Land Inc., as the new SBMA chief. The President also appointed Al Benito Mendoza, former president of the Development Bank of the Philippines, as SBMA administrator.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye recently said Arroyo will move to relieve SBMA Chair and Lt. Leonard Montano off his post on Nov. 1.

Antonio, who retired SBMA post in surrounding communities on Dec. 13, will assume office on Monday.

Zambales Rep. Hilario Mitugen Magsaysay and Olongapo City Vice Mayor Rosito Hadjilo congratulated Payumo for transforming the former American naval base into a "bustling investment hub" and for opening job opportunities to the communities surrounding Subic.

"If there's one thing that I can be proud of, it is that we have formed a community here and not just a government enclave," Payumo said.

He added, "And to you, my family, I will be coming back every after but—but—time to enjoy Subic as a more leisurely mission, not that Chase not required it for this time I will never every moment of it."

Payumo came close to crying when his children, who are based abroad, made some surprise visits during the program and expressed their appreciation for the hard work and leadership of their father.

PAYUMO

Govs, mayors back Gloria's tax measures

By Jaime B. Bulatao
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—A group of elected local chief executives and officials expressed their support to the administration's economic measures and urged the two chambers of Congress to expedite the passage of the eight revenue measures endorsed by the President.

Officials of the Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines (Ulap) are on Thursday night President Macapagal-Arroyo at the Waterfront Cebu City Hotel here.

Ulap is an umbrella organization of the leagues of governors, vice governors, provincial boards, municipal and city mayors and barangay officials.

Eastern Samar Gov. Ben Evardone, Ulap's spokesperson, yesterday said resolutions that they would lobby before the two chambers of Congress to immediately hasten the approval of the economic measures endorsed by President Arroyo.

"Ulap believes that these are measures adopted by the two houses in Congress, we will hear very close consequences of the delivery of the basic services in the provinces," Evardone yesterday said.

Dire consequences

Evardone said their group is also appealing to Congress to anticipate that big "loss of the provincial dues to the municipal and barangay levels urging Congress to pass the economic measures proposed by the government.

He said Ulap recommended the President for her support to the Bagong proposal not to use the Internal Revenue Allotment of local government units.

Evardone said the President has already submitted a P131 billion budget to Congress that included an increase in the Local IRA share.

Evardone clarified that they did not support the President's measures in order to protect their IRA share. He stressed that the passage of the economic measures would not only benefit the LGUs but the national government as well.

Barijaco del Norte Gov. Robert Lyndon Barbers, national vice president of Ulap, also said there was no need for them to protect their IRA since the share due to each LGU is provided in the Local Government Code.

Ulap also said that its officials and members are also supporting measures due to help the government.

Evardone said they would pass resolutions making a commitment to use 20 percent of their IRA to support the 10-point agenda of the President.

'World foodless day' celebrated

BAGUIO CITY—Instead of celebrating the World Food Day on Saturday members of a women's group here commemorated what they called the "World Foodless Day".

They called it so each October food, they said, a heavy rainfall worse as large-scale industries, like mining and logging operations, deprive people in the villages of their sources of food, according to Wenie Swogan Dano, chair of the mountain Cordilleras.

"Although food coupons are needed to satisfy the people's hunger. President Macapagal-Arroyo should dig deeply into the root cause of the problem by reviewing the national policies that affect the livelihood of the people," Dano said.

She said despite the Cordillera's rich resources, villagers in the region hardly benefit from their agricultural lands, minerals, forests and forests for the exploitation of mining operations, illegal logging and dam construction.

The Cordillera economy a major target of local and multinational mining companies for the extraction of its rich mineral resources, mainly gold and copper, a statement of the Cordillera Peoples Alliance said.

The Mines and Geosciences Bureau in the Cordillera is processing 64 applications for production sharing agreement (Mpsa) covering 76,190 hectares, an application for financial and technical assistance agreement (Ftaa) covering 77,249 hectares, exploration permits applications covering 277,639.14 hectares, and six industrial permit applications for 32.57 hectares.

Dano said the people's forests are also being depleted. Benito Cabaog, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

18 Vietnamese held

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—At least 18 Vietnamese fishermen on board two fishing vessels were caught, some in restricted areas off Palawan on Wednesday by the Philippine Coast Guard. The fishermen were brought to Puerto Princesa for inquest. A case of poaching will be filed against them, a crime that can imprison violators for 2 to 6 years and impose a fine of $ 30,000 per vessel.

Adelbi Taboza, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Austerity measures

TARLAC, Quezon—The Quezon local government has postponed the public unveiling of the eco-park located in Barangay Pansulalo to show by the governor's austerity program. Sha 975.5-million New Quezon park, scored by Governor Rafael Nantes, will have a visitor's building, memorial restoration facility, composting area, fishpond and organic vegetable farming site. She said the completed materials would serve as natural habitat to the organic farm. Dalle Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

3 held for illegal drugs

IBELIN, Lagaan—Police arrested three drug suspects Sun 7 for alleged violation of the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002, or the Anti-Illegal Drugs Law. Barbara Gonzaga, Mayor Ibelin, identified the suspects as Jose Wilson, 44, Ubaldo; Andrie Ellis, 48, farmer, and Ronald Calabia, 41, soldier, all residents of Barangay Pedro Bargos, Ibelan, in the act of selling shabu. Police confiscated shabu paraphernalia from the suspects. Dante, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

3 killed in collision

LUCBAN CITY—At least three people were killed while several others injured when two passenger jeepneys collided in Barangay Mayabobo here Tuesday morning. Police investigator Insp. Alejandro Alcantara identified the dead as Jose Ramos, 45, of Barangay Mayabobo, Lucban, and the three were pinned to death. Aside from the driver of the other jeepney, said he was forced to take on the lane used by Ramos to avoid losing her in an oncoming cargo truck. Charlie Salinas, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Fire razes 49 houses

BUTUAN CITY—A fire triggered by a lighted candle razed about 49 houses and the municipal hall of Bayo town on Sto. Niño Island Saturday afternoon, Senior Insp. Rodolfo Bacalso, Bayo police chief, said. Bacalso said the fire started in the house of a certain Joseph Samaniego in Barangay Poblacion at around 12:30 p.m. Witnesses said a lighted candle fell from the victim's bedroom and set fire to the curtains. Gusting Caraga's wooden houses and quickly spreading to the neighborhood. The fire also razed the municipal hall, which also houses the municipal circuit court. Franklin Caldjoyd, PDI Mindanao Bureau

ROUNDUP

Ilonggo dictionary

TIGBAUGAN CITY—The city government has signed the Samag Council for Cultural and the Arts of publishing together an Ilonggo dictionary for tourists, scholars and foreign investors. Mayor Raladelph Tieg said the project will help preserve the dialect of Samag migrants to locate the project handed by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts. Samag is said to be the richest dialect in Cagayan Valley. The project is expected to cost P500,000. Estanislao Cadelo, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Night market pushed

BISLIG CITY—Mayor Rhodis Tentor ordered to prepare night market barrels here to help decongest the traffic problem of vendors and consumers gathered nightly at daytime. Tentor said a proposed night market could accommodate vendors displaced by activities before October No. 102, the law against illegal vendors and structures. Members of the city council supported the Tentor's proposal and said it could boost economic activities in the city and outskirts. Diana Rosalito, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Malaria outbreak

TIGBAUGAN CITY—The provincial health office here declared a malaria outbreak in the Cagayan town of Sta. Ignacia and Iguig. Dr. Rosalio Tagulao, provincial health officer, said at least two persons were reported to have died of malaria in Sta. Ignacia, while several residents in the other towns were affected with this disease. He added that the incidence of dengue fever in the province had gone down by 80 percent compared to last year's figures. Fabenian Gaday, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

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Heads of three police chiefs in Rizal roll in ongoing revamp

By Luige B. del Puerto

THE POLICE leadership in Rizal has completed its first round of revamp this month, sacking three station chiefs for alleged incompetence.

"I can no longer tolerate their incompetence," declared Sr. Supt. Leocadio Santiago, provincial police chief.

Santiago relieved Supt. Jesse Celi of the Binangonan Police, Senior Insp. Dindo Martinez of the Teresa Police, and Chief Insp. Roque Ecleo de Mendoza Morales of the San Mateo Police.

The criteria beside the three officials—their apparent inability to solve crimes, particularly in arresting the spate of robberies targeting Asian safety vehicles and pawnops, said Santiago.

Supt. Raymund Ulpiano replaced Celi, Chief Insp. Fe-lino Bonanno replaced Martinez, and Supt. Nestor Lizo replaced Morales.

The changes took place during the last four weeks.

The chief of police in Taytay has also been reshuffled—but not for incompetence. Supt. Rodino Illo is currently in school.

Supt. Jaime Pilones has assumed his post.

Santiago wants another police chief ousted: Chief Insp. Miguel Peja of the Angono police.

"The mayor threw him out pleasant to me about the crime in his town. So I told him, 'Why not replace the police chief?'" Santiago said over the phone.

But he does not want to replace the police chief. That puts my office in a dilemma," the police official added.

Local executives hold considerable clout over the choice of the police chief. In many instances, good relations with town or city officials prove crucial in getting logistical support, such as cars and gasoline allowances for the police.

The mayor's support is badly needed to augment the budget of the police.

Santiago said he was ultimately responsible for the failure of his police officers, since he was their commander.

"The problem with local executives not wanting to replace incompetent police chiefs is that I cannot bring this argument to the PNP leadership. The PNP's hierarchy does not accept this kind of argument," Santiago said. "Since it is my area, it is my responsibility and there is no excuse for it."

The local police chief said he has not been hearing to convince Angono Mayor Gerry Calderon to let go of Peja.

Pete and over the phone that it was all up to Santiago. No direct supervisor, whether he stayed or went."

He admitted that the mayor wanted him to stay as town police director. But the decision is out of his hands.

"I will simply follow what ever order is given. I just do my job," he said.

A CASE OF ARSON?

Fire hits raided shabu laboratory in Parañaque City

By Marcy C. Carvajal

CORRECALS used in the manufacture of shabu were reportedly burned when fire of still undetermined origin hit an alleged illegal drugs laboratory inside the Multinational Village in Parañaque City yesterday morning.

Fire investigator SPO2 Teodorico Garibaldi, officer on case, said they were still investigating the cause of the fire that hit the storeroom of the alleged drug laboratory on Hasmin Street at about 2:30 a.m.

Reverend Huelmajan, City Mayor Florencio Bernabe said he received information that the blaze was caused by a fire bomb.

"Info sa akin medyo hindi dito iyon galing sa labas ng Acha. (I was told it was a molotov bomb that was thrown from outside the building)," Bernabe told the reporters.

He refused to say where he got the information.

When asked about the information that reached the mayor, Garibaldi said the incident "was still under investigation."

The blaze destroyed the storeroom that stood separately in the right side of the three-story house. The 1,000 square meter house was spared.

An undetermined amount of solvents used in making the illegal drug was reported to exist inside the warehouse when it went up in flames.

Leni Bendijo, agents of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency said the house was found 11 kilos of ephedrine, 46 boxes of chemicals and 624 bottles of various solvents. All are raw materials for manufacturing shabu.

As the cause of the blaze, or, by a certain darkness captured detailed as PDEA, fund date has, and "has been, reported, by a PDEA informant, were at the house keeping watch.

Garibaldi said that it was the existence of the village who alerted them of the fire.

He said several residents saw people climbing out of the compound when the fire erupted.

It was the third drug laboratory raided inside the subdivision. It was the biggest.

A Chinese national, Li Hong Hong alias Anna Wan, was arrested by police during the raid.

WPD prepares for All Souls Day

By Leila B. Salaverria

WITH TWO weeks to go before people stray to the cemeteries for All Souls' Day, the Western Police District has started preparations to ensure that the forthcoming holidays will be orderly and peaceful.

The assignments of police to specific areas during the holidays are being mapped out, as well as the retrieval of road obstructions to ensure that traffic on the said days would be flowing as smoothly as possible, said Western Police District Director Senior Chief Supt. Wahi Baluyong.

He also said the police already began coordinating with barangay officials to check for heated arrest lamps in roads leading to cemeteries in Manila.

Defective street lights will be replaced so that criminals will not be able to take advantage of the dark to commit atrocities and commercial gears.

By Oct. 20, police assistance centers and public address systems will already be set up around cemeteries to help those who are lost and confused, the WPD chief said.

And as early as two weeks before Nov. 1, Baluyong said the police would begin rounding up shoo-fleas living inside Manila's four cemeteries to maintain peace and order in the said areas.

Yesterday, over 70 men inside the North Cemetery were rounded up by police posing by fea. Gear police station members headed by Supt. Rolando Baptista.

According to Baptista, who was interviewed over dzMM, at least one of the men was confirmed wanted for homicide. The suspect had a warrant for his arrest.

The police would also check if suspected peeping robbers were also among those rounded up in yesterday's drive.

Las Piñas eyes water stations

THE BIG cities of the increasing number of water refilling stations in Las Piñas City, Mayor Imelda Aguilar ordered close monitoring and evaluation of such shops to make sure the water they are selling are safe.

At the same time, Aguilar assured the owners and operators of water refilling stations that they have still assurance and penalties should they be found selling bottled water unsafe for drinking.

Aguilar directed the city health and business permit and licensing offices to conduct a monthly inspection, classification and rating of water refilling stations in the city.

Only safe and pure water

She said the move was aimed at ensuring that city residents get only safe and purified drinking water from the filling stations.

Aguilar pointed out that classification of water retailers will have documents and operators to comply with the prescribed standards.

"In this time of crisis, multiple magkasakit. Let us make sure that the water we buy and drink are safe," she said.

Section 58 of the PD 856 on Water Supply and Sanitation Code mandates local health authorities to inspect and evaluate all water refilling stations to make sure the water that they sell meets safety standards.

DPS homecoming

ALL ECOMS Preparatory School graduates from 1968-2004 are invited to the launching of the DPS Alumni Association on Nov. 27 at the school gym.

It will coincide with the commemoration of the school's 20th anniversary.

For inquiries, call Gina Yap 351-9401 or Melita Gandoval 3061K/8228-8491 or email to dps_alumni@yahoo.com.

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METRO

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Police say crime rate fell in Sept.

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE NATIONAL Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) has reported a drop in crime volume for the month of September compared with the same period last year.

The most notable of the decreases in crime volume was, correct term index crimes, or those that have no direct victim, with 615 incidents reported last month compared with 916 reported during the same time last year.

There were also drops in the incidence of homicide, theft, robbery, physical injuries and rape, although the number of reported murder cases slightly increased.

Homicide cases fell to 29 from 44 reported in September last year.

Theft cases decreased from 614 last year to 388 this year. Robbery cases also dropped from to 237 from 277.

Physical injury cases also experienced a slight decreases, with 185 reported incidents this year compared with 199 reported cases in last year.

Rape cases had a decrease, from 28 reported incidents last year to 26 cases this year.

The number of murder cases, however, slightly increased. This year, it went up to 48 from 43 reported incidents last year.

Overall, the total crime volume for September was 3,322. The total volume for the same period last year stood at 3,940.

Pasig has healthiest hospital

IT CANNOT give what it does not have.

So, the Pasig City General Hospital (PCGH) had to be a place of health to be able to provide health. And its efforts paid off.

Recently, the Department of Health named the PCGH to the Most Outstanding Healthy Hospital in Metro Manila during ceremonies at the 2nd Philippine Health Personnel Program held at the Heritage Hotel.

The city-owned and operated hospital founded by Mayor Vicente Eusebio has a 150-bed capacity and boasts of modern medical equipment, intensive care facility, operating rooms and specialized out-patient.

PCGH has been serving the health needs of the city for three decades.

According to Eusebio, providing the best health care possible to Pasigueños is a top priority of his administration.

Apart from the hospital, the city government recently mobilized its 66 barangay level through weekly free health checkups called Linggo-ng Kalusugan.

Currently under construction is PCGH's six-story, 300-bed capacity extension building.

Gas-saving invention comes to the rescue of 3 cities

NAIA3 with a looming budget crunch, the mayors of three leading cities are running to a Filipino gas-saving invention to cut down on their gasoline expenditures.

Jake Ortiñanes, vice president and spokesperson of International Inventors Foundation, identified three as Quezon City Mayor Bonjo Bautista, Manila Mayor Lito Atienza and Puerto Princesa Mayor Edward Hagedorn.

He stateless, Bautista has decided to have the gas-saving device fitted to Quezon City's 800 vehicles in response to the government's austerity call, Ortiñanes said.

Ortiñanes said Bautista had confirmed to him that the Isuzu Super Turbo Charger (ISTC) would be installed in all the red plate vehicles of City Hall.

"Bumalik si Mayor [Bautista] sinabi niyang tutulungan ang lahat ng government vehicles ng Quezon City para pagtipid ng gasoline. (The mayor was impressed. He said that if all government vehicles in the city would have it, it would result in big savings)," Ortiñanes said.

Initially, the QC government scheduled 20 vehicles for the first batch to receive the device, but the mayor realized on the monopod section to recall all other cars for the installation of the gas-saving device.

During the unveiling of the gadget, the QC General Services Office (QSO) was surprised by the sudden appearance of Public Planas, a former driver and auto mechanic.

The QC-GSO was among the agencies, aside from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and Legislative of Energy (DoE), to have a thumbs-up sign on the PILipino inventions.

A certificate signed by Engr. Rolando Bolo, Special Operations Officer II of the QC Monopod Section shows that the testing results on a Honda Brave Multitrail was encouraging.

Planas, who personally supervised his turn in fitting the gadget to the QC-owned vehicle, filled in one and a half liters of gasoline to the Suzuki Bravo Multitrak and let it run for about six kilometers.

The QC personnel supervised what it turned out that only 20% of fuel was consumed for the short drive.

Planas said that the longer the trip would be, the more gas can save with ISTC.

Also impressed, Bolo decided to have the gadget fitted in his own car.

Interestingly, located at the second floor of President Tower in Timog Avenue, Quezon City manufactures the device.

Frogmen risk all to save lives

By Leila B. Salaverria

THERE men leave the dangers lurking in the deep, and often stare death in the eye.

They work in conditions of extreme heat and freezing cold, unmindful of stinging salt water, and even the chill of sewers.

They will plunge into the waters without hesitation to save lives.

They are the Philippine Coast Guard's frontliners—the everydiy heroes of the Special Operations Group (SOG) who lend search and rescue and retrieval missions involving tragic water accidents in the country.

Master Chief Master Angeles, 35, leads this elite group of specialists, also called frogmen, that is the PCG's equivalent of the Navy's Special Warfare Group.

Behind the scenes

Since 1992, Angeles has been quietly working behind the scenes of every sea tragedy in the country, searching for and recovering survivors, recovering bodies, luggage and other items that could provide clues for subsequent investigations, or serve as instruments in relatives and survivors.

It is not an easy task, and definitely not for the weak.

But even if he has retrieved countless bodies from sunken or burning ships, drowned airplanes or crammed sewers, Angeles confessed that he was still touched by each new experience.

"Even if the person you save is not your relative, you are always affected," he told the Inquirer. "Dun is why you need to be strong, not only physically, but you should be able to give a hold of your emotions as well."

Angeles recalled that he died nearly collapse he ventured on a 20-year-old boy from the wreck of the Lacuig International ferryboat prime that crashed into Manila Bay on November 2002, killing 19 persons.

A kick of hope

He performed CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) on the boy in the hope of reviving him, and his legs would kick every time his chest was pumped and air was breathed into him, giving hope to the rescuers.

"I thought I would be able to revive the boy," he said after an unsuccessful effort to pump air into the frail body. When he realized the boy was gone, the team still. But he had to wipe them away soon, because there was a job that had to be done.

Of all the tolerable Angeles worked on, he said the most memorable was that of Superferry 14 early this year.

One hundred eleven persons are still unaccounted for after a terrorist bomb caused the ship to burn on feb. 27.

Man's mortality

During retrieval operations, with a sea of human and decomposing bodies before him, Angeles said he was reminded of man's mortality.

"Every time I remember that rescue mission, I realize that no matter how rich or how brilliant you are, in the end, you are nothing if a tragedy like that strikes you," he said.

But the SuperFerry 14 incident was also memorable in other ways. The physical hardships that the SOG teams had to endure during the retrieval of the bodies were unparalleled, he said.

After the 18,000-ton ship caught fire while on its way to Basilan, it was towed to Zamboanga, where it ran out of gas.

Because of the ship's position, the SOG men who entered the ship had to work in surroundings skewed at a 90-degree angle.

Worse, the internal water of the bodies were located was an enclosed space, and the SOG team had to rigged down the entire length with working smoke masks to reach there but twisted bodies of metal and cluttered furniture.

Recovered bodies

When a body was retrieved, the divers had to take extra care to strap the remains in stretchers so as place them in body bags as they were hoisted to the surface.

"The task now of the bodies and made sure these were not mishandled because they drowned nothing less," Angeles said.

And because the fire inside the ship took a long time to die, the SOG teams who entered the vessel had to contend with bones, heat and ashes that filtered through their gas masks.

It was difficult and dangerous work in fact, members of the special Board of Marine Inquiry who were investigating the fire and who had visited the ship took turns of the teams having been exposed to potential fire-working conditions.

SPECIAL Operations Group Master Chief Mauro Angeles stands beside a Coast Guard boat, ready to respond to any incident that will require divers going into the deep.

Angeles said the work was hard, but they were armed with a team-oriented attitude.

"When we finished our work and all of us were safe, I thought, ang laboy ko. Joy Lord (the Lord was best ever me)!" he said.

Given the kind of situations the SOG personnel work in, it is but natural that they possess skill, strength, extraordinary stamina and the right attitude.

Being accepted into the SOG is not easy, and the group is considered elite in the navies.

Despite this, Angeles said, knowing how to swim is not a major requirement. It can be learned.

Determination, discipline and the right attitude are what's important, he added.

Only males not older than 26 years old and are shorter than 5'4" are accepted for training. They must also be college graduates and should be physically fit.

But that is just the beginning. The grueling training program calls for jogging at high noon, swimming in cold waters, and learning to function and adapt to all kinds of weather and environments. They are also trained in explosives and ordnance handling, family requirements in the light of transfer threats.

They must be alert and be able to respond any time, 24 hours a day.

"We can't tell the ship captains or shipmates not to sink or confront cold hours, which is why we have to be always prepared," Angeles said.

And sea-related accidents are not uncommon in an archipelago with more than 7,000 islands, all under the PCG's care.

Three days of 'hell'

Among the many trainees have to go through is three "hell days" during which they must not drop off to sleep while doing numerous physical challenges, and a three-mile swim that they must finish within two hours or less.

Physical fitness is paramount in SOG work, but knowledge to safety measures is important as well. All divers must faithfully follow the buddy-buddy system, for one, and observe the 12-hour rest between dives.

The hazards of diving, on the other hand, include hearing loss and diving sickness, which cause paralysis or even the drowned. Divers must also learn to control their speed of descent and ascent with the smell of decomposing bodies, which do things to the skin.

Angeles said if divers would still develop an appetite after hours of moving and breathing rotting bodies, Angeles said they had no choice but to eat to regain their strength.

Divers usually eat without utensils when at a dive site, but he said this is okay since they wear gloves while working.

SOG trainees also have a "hell blanc," where they are allowed to get drunk. The reason for this, said Angeles, is to get to know a trainee's real character, which matters when he is under the influence of liquor.

The SOG chief said those who have fights or become very troublesome when drunk were sent. It placed under observation to see if their attitude would improve or not worsen while working.

There are currently only 174 SOG operatives among the 1,500-strong PCG force, but they are frontliners, said PCG spokesperson Lt. Armand Balilo.

"When people think of the Coast Guard, they think of the divers," Balilo said. "It's a good thing they are everyday heroes."

SMALL HEAVEN

Morning Paraiso, a special ward at the UP-PGH for children with cancer, receives donations from friends led by Gali Arroyo, the President's daughter, and beauty guru Ricky Reyes, accompanied by Australian Miss Earth pageant candidate Shanelle Dixon

Water board acts to save ground water

By Tina G. Santos

THE NATIONAL Water Resources Board (NWRB) would be making it harder for people to drive more of Metro Manila's ground water.

Moves by the board to restrict the extraction of ground water came after it noted a rehydration of water to at least 11 areas in the metropolis.

In a study, the NWRB identified the critical areas in Metro Manila with deteriorating water quality due to excessive ground-water extraction through deep wells.

These areas are Marikina and San Juan's Subdivisions in Pasig-Cainta and Taguig in Makati, Mandaluyong, Quezon City, Barangay 171 in Bagumbong and Barangay 171 in Bubon's Hills, both in Caloocan City, and Tatan and Alabang in Muntinlupa.

Tough measures on ground-water extraction would be carried out in these critical areas, according to NWRB executive director Ramon Alikpala, saying that the big number of wells extracting water from the ground have seriously affected the allowable extraction rate or safe-water yield.

Safety and contamination

He explained that they noted increased salinity and contamination from near surface formations in the identified critical areas.

Alikpala added that new extractions would also result in irreversible damage to underground reservoirs.

Aside from affecting water quality, Alikpala also said that over extraction also causes land subsidence, particularly in coastal areas like Parañaque.

With this critical situation, Alikpala said the NWRB would no longer grant new extraction permits in areas where water levels are below mean sea level, or where there is faculty any water yield.

Furthermore, water permits for the critical areas that are connected to Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) are automatically revoked.

But vital sectors like hospitals and medical laboratories, their extraction rate would be reduced and they would be charged with higher water extraction fees.

The validity of the water permits to those without MWSS connection would be revoked once MWSS water service becomes available.

For noncritical areas in Metro Manila that are not connected with the MWSS, the NWRB would process permits only for backup purposes.

For those not connected, NWRB would allow processing of permits.

Sunday BIZ

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Business Features Editor Margie Quimpo-Espino

'Think before you buy, don't sacrifice quality for price'

By Jerry G. Barros

"DON'T SPEND on food, power, insurance, transport fare hikes and housing price increases in basic commodities, leaves no room for the Filipino consumer to squander his hard-earned pesos for things that are overpriced and of inferior quality.

"Think before you buy, this saves your sacrifice quality for price," Director Josie Mitsuging, senior trade and industry specialist, in a recent talk during the 4th Consumer Trade Fair held at SM Megamall. The fair is part of the Trade and Industry Department's celebration of the Consumer Welfare Month.

Established in 1997, the CPRC aims to pay tribute to the significant role consumers play in moving industries.

Mitsuging says the best way to empower Filipino consumers is to educate them. "A mature, well-informed and vigilant consumer is the best protected consumer."

Although the DTI has launched several consumer protection projects and implemented pro-consumer policies, the consumers also have to take an active part in advocating and protecting their interests.

Mitsuging says that despite the agency's aggressive efforts to pro-

To Other A2

Agency	Contact number	Area of responsibility
Dept. of Agriculture	929-6571/929-8526	Agricultural products
Bureau of Agricultural Fisheries Product Standards	929-6139/929-8134	Fish & fishery products
Bureau of Agricultural Industries	928-8888/ 920-2908	Livestock, poultry feed, meat inspections, pharmaceuticals
Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources	372-6535/372-6536	Fish and fishery products
Bureau of Plant Industry	524-6171/921-1958	All farms except rice, corn, sugar, coconut, tobacco and fibers
Fertilizers and Pesticides Authority	922-3304/922-3307	Fertilizers and pesticides
National Food Authority	712-2966/712-1487	Rice and corn
National Meat Inspection Service	926-1960/929-8439	Unprocessed and processed meat, dressed chicken
Philippine Coconut Authority	920-6430/922-4758	Price trends, quality standards and supply, availability of copra, crude and refined coconut oil, copra cake, feeded nuts, etc.
Philippine Fisheries Development Authority	925-8144	Fishing ports
Sugar Regulatory Administration	926-4331/928-6663	Sugar
Energy Regulatory Commission	897-1617/897-1044	Electric service
Department of Finance	524-2300/523-3826	
Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas	524-4161/523-4216	Banks, pawnshops
Bureau of Customs	527-8049/527-1968	Collection of taxes on cargos, shipments (int'l and domestic), smuggling
Insurance Commission	404-1126/523-8461	Insurance claims (except health insurance), duties and responsibilities of insurance commissions
Bureau of Internal Revenue	924-2304/924-2245	Registration requirements, non-issuance/fraudulent receipts, mode of payments
Department of Education	632-1580/632-1361	Integration of Consumer Education Program into existing curriculum of all private and public schools from primary to secondary levels
Department of Health	743-8301/731-2578	Hospitals, doctors' services, health maintenance organizations
Bureau of Food and Drugs	842-4582/857-9718	Processed food, drugs, cosmetics and medical devices, household products with hazardous substances
Philippine Health Insurance	632-9441/632-9999	Health insurance
Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System	435-8860	Water and sewerage related problems
Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation	841-4202/841-4080	Closed/ sold/ arbitrated/ 4-PM related problems; unauthorized transaction of banks, claim settlement
Department of Energy	840-2256/840-1981	Fuel and petroleum products
National Power Corporation	924-4241/921-3078	Performance of power distributors
Department of Environment and Natural Resources	929-6348/921-6258	Wildlife/wildlife products, forest-based products
Department of Interior and Local Government	924-1021/928-8181	Legal opinions on abuse of power/authority, drug addiction and pushing
Local Government Units		Regulation of proactive
Caloocan City	374-4860/287-2123	relative to weights and
City of Manila	527-0250/527-0859	measure, food and
Las Piñas City	871-1240	livestock in restaurant,
Makati City	899-8401/870-1181	eateries, sidewalks,
Malabon City	281-3481/281-4998	parking fees (malls,
Mandaluyong City	532-3324	private, vacant lots),
Manila City	846-3434/846-4271	bicycle rules, including
Marikina City	942-2921/682-6178	traffic; car accidents
Navotas	283-4152/281-8802	and traffic; apartments
Pasay City	831-3434/551-3434	and house for rents (1-year only); renter-all-carry rights (i.e. discounts; funeral services (license)
Quezon City	924-3381/928-6818	Subdivisions, condominiums
Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board	637-4751/882-4861	
Metropolitan Waste Development Authority		Traffic, solid waste management, public safety, environmental management, zoning, flood control
National Water Resources Board	929-0944/925-0124	Water resources, such as deep wells to subdivisions
Department of Justice (DOJ)	924-1255	Legal services to qualified indigents
Local Water Utilities Administration	929-4626/929-6481	Provincial urban water supply
Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)	811-8031 to 1210	Product standards/laws, unfair competition, labeling, price tag of manufactured products, sales promotion, bait-and-switch tactics, bidding, out of line transport, violation of transport discount, overcharging of fares
Department of Transportation and Communications	733-1958	
National Telecommunications Commission	925-1123/498-7132	Telephone refunds, TV, radio broadcast rates, leased data, coast services (slide to view)
Department of Tourism	524-1139/524-8841	Regulations of operations of firms, individuals, entities, and establishments catering to tourists
Securities and Exchange Commission	726-8831/726-8849	Pre-need plans issued by pre-need companies, quoted investment

Verbal precision: Not the exclusive domain of writers

"The New York Times Manual of Style and Usage" By Allan M. Siegal and William G. Connolly (New Times Press, 1999)

By Diana H. Veloso
Correspondent

SPEAKING of style, a writer said: "If you come to a president, you are to sit style."

Those who struggle with achieving clarity in their writing will find the just-quoted statement useful. It affirms an aphorism that "style is the man."

After all, when you express your self in writing, the way you write should not feel, you across at your ears "unique voice" – or style.

But Robert Frost reveals that the search for the right expression is pure pleasure. "All the fun's in how you say a thing," he said.

You will know a writer even at a young age if he or she is sensitive to that "sum of phrase." Or if he struggles to get the precise word or even to use a symbol – to semiotonate.

Those who use a language, my high school English teacher told us then, must accord it the highest respect – by using only the precise word or phrase, by mastering syntax and grammar, and by being ever sensitive to the evolution of usage.

So you think this is only for creative writers or journalists? Having a style – or best at precision in language – is as important to the board director, its executive suites, and to folks when one is giving a speech or making a presentation.

Imagine a language without rules. Then you would not know the past tense from the present tense. You could not distinguish between the noun and the object.

EXECUTIVE READ

Whether style is a set of tools and tricks, a tone of voice," say Allan M. Siegal and William Connolly, authors of the book "The New York Times Manual of Style and Usage."

The book is supposed to be the "rule book" of the reporters of the Times, and yet it might as well be an executive's handbook on word choices, rules of grammar, and on names or abbreviations.

Every major publication, including the Inquirer, has a style book which serves reporters and editors on the style and character of that publication. Preparing a style book is a choice – since the dictionary gives us some latitude in choosing which word to use.

Will you use "behavior" or "behaviour"? Is your gender unnecessarily expressed in your description of "chairman" or "chairperson" in favor of the neuter "chairperson"? Both a choice, however, could become troublesome if one smart-aleck staff will say that, if you bring it to its logical conclusion, "manhole" becomes "person hole," "man" the opposite sex, "woman" a "person" the opposite sex," and so forth.

The Times remains traditional, assert the authors. "This manual reflects The Times' impression of its educated and sophisticated readership – traditional but not traditionbound."

It also means that companies could also come up with their style book, so that every executive, manager and secretary can bow to easily into one dimension of corporate character.

For instance, the manual says, "rabbit" is for golf; while "bunny" is for tea. Golfers, so you take note of your sexes, remember this distinction. What about "hopefully" as a word? You read this in many stories and even in mail. What does the manual say?

The book discusses opinions in using the word, thus "In the sense of 'we so hope,' this adverb inflames passions. Widely heard in speech, it is also approved by most dictionaries and usage manuals. Grammarians equate that usage to universally accepted nonsense with Dunkly and mentally. But leading couchers insist that hopefully can be used only to mean in a hopeful manner."

Then the stylebook rules on usage for The Times. "Writers and editors unwilling to intervene couchers would be wise to set the they hope-or-set be limit. Hint: Avoid hopefully, please."

Just to show you that this is not only for journalists, listen to this discussion on a choice between chairperson or chairwoman. The stylebook rules: "Do not use chairlay or chairperson."

What about chair? The stylebook says: "As a noun, it can mean an endowed professorship, or a position to act/embrace."

This firm advice is illuminating: "Do not use chair to mean chairman or chairwoman." Ahh, they are The Times, you say...and yet it's good to know how publications differ in their choices!

What about this? In school, we frowned on the cheater – he who manages to get a "leakage" or one who has writers everything on its bottom skin. What does the stylebook say? "Use cheat, not cheats, for a person who cheats."

The 371-page book has more than 3,000 words, phrases and abbreviations that will clue enable any Times reporter to "be tidy" in his writes, in a manner of speaking, this "tidyness," this preparation for who set expectations to use the exclusive domain of journalists.

You may not agree with all the choices of The Times, but you will appreciate the care, the scrupulousness, and the paper's commitment to verbal precision.

Actually, this is not just a manual. Leafing through the pages introduces you to the wit, grit of expression and breadth of experience of the authors.

It's like eavesdropping on the writers of The Times advising a young reporter how to close up his or her story. It's not how-how thing to bring in the ceremonies of the respected newspaper. (dianeveloso@yahoo.com)

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Choose freedom.

Think ...

not the consumer, it is sometimes rendered helpless because the problems already lies with the consumers themselves.

"We are, the problem with some Filipinos is that they are too friendly," says Mitaging. "Don't be ashamed to ask about a product, especially those that are potentially harmful or damaging to your body."

In the same manner, some Filipinos are too shy or lazy to report a complaint. There are those who simply don't care at all. If no one, cannot dares to air his sentiments, then no solution can be expected from the agency, explains Mitaging.

Others, Mitaging adds, don't bother to read labels, instructions and the fine print.

There are those, according to Mitaging, who have the impulsive, "sige na nga" attitude when buying, only to realize later on that he doesn't really need the product. He can only ask himself: does, "Bakit ko nga ba ito binili ko?" (Why did I buy this?)

Some consumers would feel they have been unwittingly coerced in buying product because they were "ganged up" by three or four pushing sales people, who claim the product to be perfect for them.

It is for these reasons, according to Mitaging, that they conduct seminars from time to time to inform and remind people of their rights and responsibilities as wise, conscientious consumers.

She adds that a lot of consumers seem to have forgotten that they do have rights. Others, simply take them for granted.

These consumer rights are means of protection from manufacturers who take advantage of certain "non trusting" consumers.

There are eight basic consumer rights, which include the right to:

Basic needs. One should not be denied of his right to guaranteed survival through adequate provision of food, clothing, shelter, health care, education and sanitation.

Timex celebrates 150th year in Cebu

TIMEX employees strain to catch a glimpse of their idols.

FACES of Timex watches: Marc Nelson, Claudine Barretto, Piolo Pascual

PHOTOS BY BEA FORMOSO

By Bea B. Formoso
Contributor

TIMEX, the American watch brand famous the world over for its price, quality and innovations in time-telling, celebrated its 150th anniversary this year at its biggest factory, the TMX Philippines plant in Mactan, Cebu.

The 24-year-old plant located in the Mactan Export Processing Zone in Lapu Lapu City covers nine hectares and employs about 3,000 Filipinos, who are responsible for the manufacture of 95 percent of all Timex watches and a number of other brands that the company supplies.

For all their hard work, the factory workers were given a treat for the celebration: a visit from local celebrities and Timex endorsers Piolo Pascual, Claudine Barretto and Marc Nelson.

The stars have been endorsers of the global brand for two years now, and a new ad campaign featuring raunchy poses and sensual images of them taken by photographer Tom Epperson is rumored to be coming out very soon.

They toured the plant and even stopped for a few lessons on watch-making from some lucky factory workers.

The employees were clearly prepared for the big day, with many of them holding up streamers and pictures of their idols. A raffle had been held beforehand for picture-taking with the stars.

Piolo sang to the delight of the crowd, which was composed mostly of females as majority of Timex's factory workers are women because their delicate hands are needed for precision.

The endorsers were presented with the new Perpetual Calendar watch, another Timex technological breakthrough.

The watch keeps track of the day/ date/ month and year for you, even adjusting for leap years, and will do so for seven years straight till it is time to replace the battery, which Timex will do for free.

This is a new addition to a line-up of technologies that Timex is recognized for: Indiglo Night Light, Compass, Datalink Organizer (Microsoft software that allows you to store information in the watch) and BodyLink, a sport performance-monitoring system, among others.

Having been in the time-telling business for 150 years, Timex has come a long way since it began as the Waterbury Clock Co. in 1854 in Connecticut, US, when it made pocket watches.

The name was changed to Timex after World War II with the production of the first line of wristwatches for men.

Known as the all-American watch, Timex is the top brand in the United States and Canada and can be found on the wrists of US presidents as a show of patriotism.

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'Think before you buy, don't sacrifice quality for price'

From page B3

Safety. Refers to one's right to be protected against the marketing of or provision of goods and services that are hazardous to health and life.

Information. Pertains to right to be protected against dishonest or misleading advertising or labeling, as well as the right to be provided with facts and information essential to making a wise choice.

Choice. Refers to right to choose products at competitive prices with an assurance of satisfactory quality.

Representation. This is the right to express consumer interests and having a voice in the making and execution of government policies through public meetings.

Redress. Pertains to one's right to be compensated for misinterpretation, shoddy goods or unsatisfactory services.

Consumer education. This is the right to acquire knowledge and skills necessary to be an informed consumer.

Healthy environment. Refers to one's right to live and work in an environment which is neither threatening nor dangerous, and which permits a life of dignity and well-being.

Alibagay was quick to add, however, that every right is coupled with a responsibility.

For a consumer to fully enjoy his rights, he also has to fulfill certain obligations, not only for his own well-being, but also for the others.

5 Consumer responsibilities

Critical awareness. Refers to one's responsibility to be more alert and inquisitive about the price, quality and use of goods and services.

Action. Each consumer has to adopt an active stance. He has to assert and act to ensure that he gets a fair deal. If one remains a passive consumer, he will continue to be exploited.

Social concern. One also has to be always aware of the impact of his consumption on other citizens, especially the disadvantaged or powerless groups, whether in the local, national or international community. It is for this reason that hoarding and panic-buying are highly discouraged by DTI.

Environmental awareness. Refers to the responsibility to understand the environmental consequences of our consumption. One should recognize the individual and social responsibility to conserve natural resources and protect the earth for future generations.

Solidarity. It is also important that consumers organize together to develop strength and influence in order to better advocate and protect consumer interest.

Alibagay adds that an intelligent consumer makes a wise choice by asking himself some of these questions:

- Do I really need it or can I do without it? Can I afford it?
- Is the quality acceptable?
- Is the price fair or is there a cheaper substitute of the same quality?
- Does the label give all the information I need?
- Does it have nutritional value? How will it affect my health?

To further advocate consumer interests, DTI has established ConsumerNET to increase the awareness of consumers that there are agencies, other than the DTI, who can more aptly address particular complaints.

ConsumerNET forms a network of 26 government agencies and 11 local government units in Metro Manila. These agencies can provide redress based on their respective mandates under the provisions of the Consumer Act. *(See table in Page B3 for list of agencies, their contact numbers and areas of responsibility).*

Established in 1996, ConsumerNET also aims to provide speedy resolution of consumer complaints and facilitate a smooth flow of consumer protection information.

Sea grass makes village folk's lives a little better

By Joyce Pangilinan
PLA Southern Luzon Bureau

LIBON, Albay—Ten years ago families in this sleepy village depended on their meager income from farming for survival and could hardly send their children to school.

Today, most of the about 2,000 villagers send their kids to school, and were able to build decent homes made of concrete.

The sea grass, locally called tagbelow or ayas has transformed the people of Sampaguy, Bulusan from a struggling people to village fellow who have built a name in the world of handicraft here and abroad.

Weaving

Weaving the sea grass into household products is not new in the residents.

Ms. Nenita Sevilla, Bulusan Handicraft Producers Association, (Bulhapro) president, says sea grass weaving has become a source of livelihood of their parents.

But it was not property recognized and there was no specific or **stable market for it.** They just made sea grass products for local buyers and in minimal volume.

Until the Sevilla-based Community Crafts Association of the Philippines found the local resource. Suggesting/how is a big potential market for sea grass products, the CCAP encouraged them to group themselves together to into an organization so they would have an identity.

The Bulhapro was born with 31 members in 1994. It was registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission in 1998.

Mainly women, members were taught by the CCAP how to enhance their products. The CCAP also looked for possible markets here and outside the country.

Bulhapro's products have reached different parts of the world—in America, Europe, Australia and other Asian countries through exporters in Metro Manila. Its members have buyers in the region and some parts of the country.

Their products range from bags, boxes and others, depending on the orders of their customers. The sea grass used by the organization usually comes from Libon and other places like Legazpi, Iriga City and even Camarines Sur.

Process

Contrary to what its name implies, sea grass here grows in rice fields, although there is another kind that really thrives near the seashore.

The grass is usually harvested during wet season, when the soil is still soft and wet. The best time to harvest, according to Sevilla, is June to July although the grass keeps on growing throughout the year.

"The grass is so stiff in rice during hot season, that's why we can't harvest it at that time because it is not suitable for weaving. The leaves are rough during that season," she says.

After harvesting, the grass is sun-dried for about two days, then sprinkled with water.

After that, the materials are now ready for the weaving process, according to the desired output.

The Department of Labor and Employment and the Department of Trade and Industry gave the Bulhapro members facilities to prevent growth of molds.

The Bulhapro members design their products but recently, CCAP sent a designer from the US to guide them how to improve the designs.

PRODUCTS made of sea grass.

Benefits

The industry gave them lots of benefits, according to Sevilla.

Most workers of Bulhapro earn an average daily income of P500 and they work in the comfort of their own houses.

Eddie Lanao, the treasurer of the cooperative, says the industry uplifted their lives. His kids already know how to weave and help her when they don't have classes.

In Sampaguy Bulusan, almost **every able member of the family** knows the process of weaving already.

Bulusan is not the only handicraft in Libon benefiting from the industry.

Encouraged by the success in Sampaguy Bulusan, CCAP also organized weavers in Sampaguy Del Rosario, also in Libon, which produces like coarse products.

Prospects

With a gross income of some P600,000 to 2003, Bulhapro members hope to cash in further on the sea grass products.

Sevilla says in preparation for the advent of voluminous orders, **they are thinking of expanding** their organization and will welcome members from other places.

Some of the officers of Bulhapro are being sent to other places in the country to teach the techniques they are trained by **some agencies like the DTI and the CCAP itself.**

They are also being trained to different trade fairs in the country. On Dec. 20, they will participate in the Organic Eco Direct Trade fair at the SM Megamall.

The DTI Albay office, which gives regular training to the organization, says the sea grass industry is doing well amid crisis in the handicraft market nowadays.

Cleito Jalin, DTI Albay trade and industry specialist, says they aim to give the Bulhapro direct access to foreign markets.

"Hopefully, through participation in trade fairs and exhibits, they will be able to get foreign clients so they can market directly to foreign countries," the exec.

The association, Sevilla says, is getting full support from the local government of Libon in terms of promotion. But she says they are **now lobbying for the establish**ment of town's small drying place where they could dry their products, especially during rainy season so they could still have better products even during the days.

"We also lack warehouse where we could keep the sea grass after harvest," she says.

Providing opportunities for buyers and sellers

FRIENDSHIP and with Joey and Dina Cuerva grew up privileged in the town of Marikina—actors of thriving industry pioneers.

"Joey and I grew up with shoemakers. We were awed by their skills and aware of their plight as tradesmen whose earnings can barely sustain their family," said Dina. "Marikina's shoe industry has been in a downhill for years now. Especially after the markets opened to cheap China-made shoes. That is why Joey and I decided to go into small-level marketing as a means for promoting and selling our very own line of Marikina-made shoes...evolved in the tradition of American style, European quality and Filipino functionality. Definitely far more durable than the cheap imports flooding the market."

The rest set up JC Martin.

The move to revive the Marikina shoe industry was earlier started by Five Quadrant in 2002. Five Quadrant is a multi-level company that aims to provide a venue for Marikina shoemakers to showcase and sell their wares. Their product lines eventually expanded to include bags, apparel, cosmetics and fragrances.

Joey and Dina adopted a similar goal. As they helped the Marikina shoe industry they likewise got a chance to be their partners for income-generating activities. They made shoes and JC Martin people sold them at discounted dealer's price, hoping a wider market reach and growth. JC Martin soon opened its doors to well-known suppliers like Rustabo Rubber, Timers and Hanz Sandles.

"We also welcomed suppliers of bags and garments for organizing an exhibition. We asked them for product presentations to gauge the quality of their products. And often it yielded amazing discoveries that we've added to JC Mart its product lines. One people has by-bulk at discounted prices and then retail it," he said.

"Our company is serious on network building as well as brand building. We always emphasize to our agents that selling is an important as networking. They don't just stop at getting the P7,000 start up package and focus on networking for which they earn P1,000 per network. We encourage them to focus on direct

JOEY and Dina Cuerva set up Lovable-based marketing firm that taps various existing producers sold by their agents at retail.

selling as well," Joey emphasizes.

JC Martin does not frontload—meaning no dealer gains of discounted bulk sale. That way they can retail, say a pack of muffins at P700 a line of herbal soap at P22. And that's below the suggested retail price.

The name JC Martin comes from Juan de la Cruz and the saint, Martin de Porres. The couple finds their company provides opportunities for people from all walks of life both as agents and as consumers.

JC Martin earned the Top Multi-level Marketing Institute from the National Consumers Award 2004.

Tapping consumers who can't afford to pay cash

SONOMA Valley is a place in California that is best known for its wine and wineries, rich land, peaceful setting, good climate, relaxing atmosphere and spectacular vistas of the region's natural resources.

Sonoma Valley is also the name of **Hawaii's venture into direct selling.** The word "Sonoma" is a play-with words. It is an acronym for "Son of Mauch," which in time may can describe the new subsidiary of Mauch.

Mauch (combined names of husband and wife founders Manuel Uy and Sofia Siggaoat) has made its products available through the direct selling channel since March. Its product line consists of premier leather and man-made leather products such as shoes, bags, belts and small leather goods. Sonoma also carries apparel for adults and children. Sonoma Valley has added new product lines to its pre-holiday closing. These are silver accessories (Tendera and Treasures), Food supplements (Bioflo) manufactured by Mauch's affiliate Siggaoat Pharmaceutical Co.) as well as bed linen and innerwear.

Mauch has been in the retail business for 48 years now. Its overseer in-charge of selling it to reach out to customers who are not mall shoppers. Noel Siggaoat, vice president of Mauch, explains: "Customers have an access to it through the malls and could access but there is another type of consumer who does not go to malls (or if they visit malls, they more or less don't buy). They can be reached only by their associates, neighbors and by members of their community. These are usually the **easy-at-home housewives or factory** workers who can't really make cash purchases, maybe because they don't have the means to shell out

HARVEY Siggaoat, CEO, Mauch Group of Companies; Hella Villacorta-Siggaoat, president.

whole cash amounts or their money is so tightly budgeted. These people usually buy from their co-workers or their neighbors—on credit, or in installment schemes such as four plans, etc. So our dealers can service this kind of consumers because they often are them...and they will be able to collect from them."

"Most of these people are really good payers. It's just that they don't have instant cash to purchase things. When they buy on credit, the payment is in installments so they can squeeze it into their budget...as it is only a portion of the whole amount. So we are targeting these people, we are making "a trip" to their place to sell our in lines through the direct selling method," Noel shares.

Noel also noted that direct selling is very popular nowadays—the "by" thing considering these times of financial difficulties, and of people wanting to put up their own businesses. He remarks, "There was a lot of direct selling companies already, but there are still many being put up. It is because the number of dealers keep increasing and they are in constant search of new products and credible brands which they can bring as their consumers. So I can say that the direct selling industry here is in our country is growing. The reason for its growth is because there's this trend of people going into business for themselves."

Direct selling, according to Noel, offers limitless opportunities. For as low as P5,000-10,000 investment, a dealer or consultant can already get items from Sonoma Valley that they can sell to the other shops, in their own places or through door-to-door selling.

One advantage is that Sonoma Valley (as a direct selling company) and Mauch (a manufacturer) can collide. The success of direct selling is based on effort, phenomenon of the direct seller, the time spent, and the speed of sales. Hence, various incentives (and rebates) await the dealers.

These once and future brides know their business

By Gisella Goloy
Entertainer

AT 1:30P, wedding reception, Ning Baredes-Tadeus couldn't just smile and keep her poise, she was also busy in the waiters, getting high school classmates at St. Scholastica's College put up two years ago. The idea was inspired by a call for help from another classmate.

"She was asking for tips in organizing her wedding," recalls Cinsley Hernandez. "We pretended/OM. "I referred her to different suppliers and offered suggestions, just as a wedding planner would." Cinsley does had five years' experience in concert organizing as a queen and lemon club in Makati.

Ning and Cinsley's first client was, of course, another classmate, Joanna Cristobero Belgica, who later became a partner. When they planned Joanna's wedding two years ago, however, it had not yet occurred to them to do it as a business venture.

"It was always a thought, just for fun. Our discussions never really zoomed over to serious planning. But we had the contacts and knew what to do and how to do it," says Joanna, 30 for finance.

"So a way, no wedding was the day-ness," says Ning, 35 for marketing. But even at that point, they **still wouldn't consider the** prospects. Making money was further from their minds; the satisfaction of having organized a friend's **wedding was rewarding enough.**

It was only when Cinsley acquired a franchise outlet of The Swan Bake Shop (and Catering) that things started to fall into place. "I had the premises, the contacts, so, in explaining a business/corporation name at SEC, putting up an office and investing money," says Cinsley. "After many late-night meetings, we finally decided to make a go of it. The bakeshop would also be out of fine and showrooms. It made sense that I would be managing the office/showroom and my bakeshop at the same time. After all, the bakeshop is a related business."

Soon after Nanda joined the trio, Ana Maldonan, Cathy Pania, Trina Sola-Nanda, Roslyn Libed, three of them have had experience in events organizing, business administration, marketing, and one owns a catering firm.

They pooled their resources to raise a modest capital, which they spent for the construction, repairs, and refurbishing of their showroom/office located at 3276-B Pasong Tamo St. corner Kalayaan Ave., Makati City. The rules however was allocated for the overhead expenses they would incur for a whole year. They also set aside funds for marketing and licensing/documentation expenses.

Being all of the marrying age, they say, makes them perfect for the business. They were got the chance to practice their wedding planning skills on two of the partners! Three of them are now married, with the wedding of two expectantly the girls' own group.

But what exactly does a wedding planner do? Since the bride and bridegroom of the misty-gaze of preparing for their big day, he or she contacts the suppliers, books for a venue, and makes sure all on the day itself, everything will be picture-perfect.

"All of us take part in the coordination on the wedding day itself. We ensure smiles at the dressing site, church, reception," says Cathy, corporate secretary. "We're definitely hands-on," adds Cinsley.

Wedding financials also expose others, parties and special events.

But doesn't hiring event specialists entail extra expense? "We work around the client budget," replies Joanna.

"Weddings are one more creatively planned. One generation would rather seek expert advice to make sure that plans are executed properly, down to the last detail," observes Cinsley. "Most brides these days are busy, working women who don't have all the time to contact suppliers or check out venues suited to their wedding budget. That's why wedding coordinators have become a necessity: they know exactly how to choose venues and other wedding within a budget, to create a couple's dream wedding."

Well, I'm a geologist, and I dream of a wedding on Mount Mayon.

"You are the dreamer of the century and I'll tell you if it can be a plausible theme," Cinsley "fires off," rising to my challenge.

APEDUS owner Terry Villas says enjoying and loving your business is the key

Engineer takes care of own need, ends up with a venture

By Madonna T. Virola
INQ Southern Luzon Bureau

CITY OF CALAMBA—Terry Villas, 40, was grossly discouraged by some members of his family and friends when he, a mining engineer, went into entrepreneurship and pioneered the manufacture of compact (small) sleeping bags two months ago.

"Seriously, I kept the thought that one day they would become money from me," says Villas.

His major products under brand name Apedus, consist of term of eight to 10 designs, which are mostly rectangular (mummy-shaped sleeping bags) and two rounds.

Apedus is supplying more than 30 stores or branches nationwide. Its products are seen during trade fairs at Old Megamall.

Apedus was first tried to be registered as Apex with the Department of Trade and Industry in 1994.

Since Apex had become a common name, Villas, a mountaineer, added the suffix ex, connoting "the mountain."

Of export quality, prices of sleeping bags range from P700 to P1,400. P1,400, 90/100 for wool, and from 1,600 pesos to P750 for accessories like backpack covers, floor mat blankets and stuff sacks, and cook cookers, among other items.

Since 1995, Villas started manufacturing sleeping bags and distributed them among friends who own mountaineering shops (either) in until his products reached other cities in the Visayas and Mindanao.

Gradually, sleeping bags or pandelicos (as they produces, specifically term.

Board topnotcher

Born to teenagers Rufo (dubbed as "Little Tondo"); here, Villas finished mining engineering at the Adventist University and landed in top 10 in the board exams.

"Since childhood, I really wanted to be an engineer so a scientist," he says.

His father influenced him to pursue mining engineering. "I really like numbers," Villas claims.

His mother worked at the Bureau of Lands for 40 years and for more than 30 years, his father was also fishing.

After graduation, Villas worked in a private mining firm in Surigao. Then for five years at the Mines and Geosciences Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

He then worked for about one and a half years in the Technology and Livelihood Resource Center evaluating, preparing and financing export-oriented small and medium-scale livelihood projects.

"TLRC helps a lot in building confidence among those who want to go into business. Here you are exposed to real people to solved in the business.

You learn their failures and successes," says Villas.

Inspiration

"Nobody in the family is into business. Most are teachers and government employees," says Villas.

From his inspiration, grandfather Simplicio, over 100 years old now, was against business. It consist of Villas told him of his grandfather's bias against the economy of those into business.

Even as a young child, Villas already, was also turned off with Filipino-Chinese businessmen.

His grandfather did not finish school. "But until the latter years of his life, we saw him reading some stuff, books and the Bible."

Villas had so much respect for him.

"His conviction, true to people, respected in the community and with incomparable wisdom, maybe better than some Ph.D. holders," he declares his grandfather.

Villas says he experienced his first job at Test Pit pan old when he would gather coconuts and get small gas pieces of gas thousand pieces to the existing ratchets, plus bonus of more than than the usual rate at the end of the summer season. "I learned the value of work."

At the end of summers he got his pay of P50 or more, a big amount then for his age.

Gets

Villas pursued a Masters in Business Administration at the De La Salle University in Manila, thinking that he established his present business, despite/many depressions.

He did three asynchronous businesses: First, he formed organizations in the late Seventies in Barangay Bgy here, which he borrowed from his parents. He was laughed at so he was doing retailing.

Second was Japanese food. Villas needed four buying sea urchins alive (here were, present days, and sell in Manila. It didn't last for one year as supply was limited.

Third was the sleeping bags. "I started with this in 1997 because there was none suitable for mountaineers. What was available then was a bulky sleeping bag not suitable for mountaineering. When I tried to buy a mountaineering sleeping bag, I was required a reservation of one month before delivery in Manila from a very rare mountaineering shop, Villas relates.

He decided he would rather produce one. He didn't participate in the mountaineering yet, though he was a mountaineer.

Villas decided to focus on a business because he wanted to settle down with finances; a law from Bagong. So he borrowed P12,000 from the Government Service Insurance System.

He pooled all his resources from his only 10 sellers, he would go to Cubao to take care of the market.

On Sept. 30, 1995, his mother died. She was supposed to support Villas' business through her retirement benefit.

This time, his "mould for" capital became the family's money. He mortgaged Kinabalan 20 (Other Lane). He was granted an exemption under Republic 10 personnel after the Subic experience to encourage small entrepreneurs.

Enjoying the business

Villas, being a mountaineer, knows the right gamut of business and has the destabilizers for his market.

"It's important that you are happy with what you are doing. Enjoying and loving your business is the key," he says, stressing that it is his hobby.

He was learning through experience to slow and the fastest is through education. After his MBA in La Salle, his production and marketing became more effective.

There are various problems and headaches in the business, Investigation helps, he says.

"My purpose was to produce reasonably priced quality products. We can compete with North-Face in America in terms of quality but with 30 percent less in price," Villas boasts.

He continues local materials with imported ones.

Lean season, June to August, does not worry him much because he has a steady market, among his clients are sporting shops like Tokyo's, Chinky sports, sportshops and specialty mountaineering shops nationwide.

His strategy is to come up with more models. "I welcome competition, it improves my business."

His friends were jokes of him as a "capitalist." "But I'm willing to share my knowledge, things made sweeter."

While his products are of export quality, Villas said he'd first saturate the local market. He believes that "doing into export is really good, especially in the part of Subic where. As far as operation is concerned, not yet."

DIRECT Secretary Vince Perez (right) and Mirant Philippines president Edgardo Barrios (left) signed a Memorandum of Agreement to energize an additional 100 barangays in the next two years as an extension of Project Beacon. Present at the event were (from left) Mirant Corp. CEO Marco Fuller, President Macapagal Arroyo and Montebello Hub George Ty

'Tis better to have electric lights than candles burning in the dark

By Abigail L. Ho

SUBIC, it's better to light one little candle than to stumble in the dark (yes, that's borrowed from an old song). But isn't it so much better to have electric lights or instead of candles burning, no matter how far those are from home?

Residents of a barangay in Toledo, Cebu, have just been given this chance because the construction of using electric light bulbs after having been used to using candles and kerosene lamps to light their homes during the dark hours of the day.

Mirant Philippines Corp., the local arm of Atlanta-based Mirant Corp. and the country's largest independent power producer, last month turned over to the government the 1,000th electrified barangay under its $20-million Project Pi, billion) Barangay Electrification Assistance for Countryside Development (Project Beacon).

Project Beacon is considered the largest corporate social responsibility program undertaken by a single private corporation in the country.

Edgardo Barrios, Mirant Philippines president and chief executive, said the provision of electricity to remote areas in the country would help ensure that the quality of life of the people there would be greatly improved.

With electricity now at their disposal, he said local economies in the Bong Project Beacon have benefited as businesses would be better developed, therefore expanding income and livelihood opportunities for people there.

Since Project Beacon was undertaken in cooperation with the Department of Energy, National Electrification Administration, various local government units and electric cooperatives.

The total electrification project is Mirant's contribution to the DOE's "E-for" Program, a multi-sectoral approach to bring electricity to 100 percent of the population by 2006.

"I have to thank Mirant for this huge, huge investment. You have put you investment in the sense of your ordinary power project, but investment you have put in human development by making all these barangay electrification projects," President Macapagal-Arroyo said of the program.

Going for more

After having formally turned over its 1,000th energized barangay to the government last month, Mirant immediately started billing another commitment to provide electricity to another 500 barangays in the next two years.

This, Barrios said, served as a continuation of Mirant's support for the government's socio-economic programs.

Due to the vision of Project Beacon, Mirant's additional efforts to provide electricity to more "grassroots" villages all over the country has the end in mind of uplifting the quality of life of residents there.

The Project Beacon experience showed that the presence of electricity to the beneficiary barangays enabled residents to explore more livelihood opportunities.

For example, upon energization, some barangays put up stores selling frozen foods. Due the absence of electricity before, this was impossible to do.

Fishermen are now also able to extend the freshness of their catch due to the availability of electric freezers. They can also now hold first cruise boats.

Farmers, on the other hand, can turn on pumps to irrigate their lands, giving them the opportunity to grow more crops.

Education is likewise enjoyed in the Project Beacon beneficiary barangays as some schools there, around 500 of them in all nationwide, now have computer rooms as part of their curriculum.

The firm spend for educational activities has also been extended as both students and teachers can now do their assignments and paperwork well into the night due to the presence of electric lights.

More than 3,000 jobs were also created after the energization of 1,000 barangays as industries sprout as an economic zone where there used to be little economic activity.

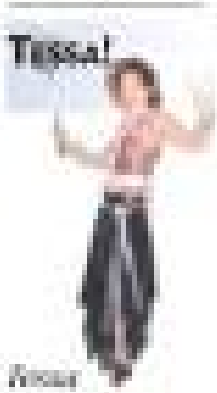
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
Sunday LIFESTYLE

CHARMING racers, Sienna, Diana Zubiri and Aimee Villanueva

The daredevil and the 'Assumptionista' in me

CELEBRITIES, sports and charity seem to be a winning combination for a successful event in these challenging times. Two recent, sports-related affairs allowed me to expand my wardrobe to include sporty, casual chic attire. But I quickly realize that such is my least favorite look since it requires minimal accessories and playing with a wig and feathers is disastrous.

Not that I've been able to plan my activities. During my recent holiday in Greece, apparently I brought home the ultimate Olympic souvenir



Aimee Sylvia Sybilla

—I am now in my first trimester. For a 2005 baby! Every workout schedule, which included belly dancing, Pilates, kickboxing, triathlon and yoga, have been put on hold for nine months as officially a sports enthusiast.

At the recent Mona Celebrity Bowling Challenge, I have never seen such a huge gathering of showbiz glitterati and political big wigs bowling in one of the Manila Speedway lanes. I actually tried bowling in their old-to-retire-soon shoes/pair. (In what can only be described as a good move, Bangko Kanan Diana Ostmar decided to volunteer to the more accessible Tita Role.)

Is it politically incorrect to call myself a woman (since I'm already over double that

ORIENT players Kerwin Pascual, Raja Laurel, Raya Manzanga and Curry Wilo

ASSUMPTION Batch '81 with Marita Moreno

The daredevil and the 'Assumptionista' in me

SEXY Pamela Javier with young racer Alfonso Martinez

I went karting against the best and ended last, and smashed shuttlecocks with celebrities and ended . . . quite smashed

KIDATLERK Productions' Jessica Rodrigues and hubby David Bonnevie

ARISE For men's winners Paolo Villaluz, Dominic Ochoa and Richard Gomez

PRETTY Agot Isidro

CHAMPION Multi-Relay Challenge: Rep. Albert Garcia, Ramon Christopher Richard Gutierrez and Tonton Gutierrez

SPEEDDEMS racers Dyan Castillejo, Marc Nelson, Bernard Palanca, Mike Palanca and Geoff Rodrigues

VIDEO boss Albert Arcilla, Carmela Payot and Bing Jambora-Ongsiako

ADIDAS gear for decampeion Batch 81 members Peaches Luciano-Jamora, Carolyn Tesoro Salud, Jaki Palma, Pepsie Gamboa and Meg Soriano-Reyes

Impeman stars Maria Prieto and FLDT's Manny Pangilinan

HUNK Dasmar Ocampo and BFF couple Marissa and Joey Concepcion

ZOMG owner Nina Concepcion Monserrat and Bentley Monserrat

MORE 411 winner Cindy Pelino Magsaysay, Gina Dedicatoria and Jenni Campos

HSBC CEO Warner Manning and wife Julie

BADMINTON champions Wally Fernandez and Wheng Uy

STUDIO 5th opening: Tina Ocampo, me, Patrick Bessa, Eric Henridge, Daphne Oseña- Paez, Lala Fajas , Yvette Rogan, Pauline Suarez-Jain and Chuth Religioso

New hair harber

As usual, I was juggling multiple events, so I had to quickly leave between I was the guest of honor at the new hair salon of Eric Manington, Studio 328 in the Shangri-La Plaza Mall, One of my favorite makeup artists, Eric is in charge of making me look good for my HSBC and Gemstone Mercer print ads. So I was overjoyed that his parlor is directly across Urban Spa and Preview after **Pauline Amaro Juan's** hair spa on the fifth floor of the mall. Now I can plan a whole day, total makeover, all in one corner of the mall!

'Colegiala' badminton

My next big sports-viewing event was my own Assumption Batch 81 Badminton tournament at the new Jose events in Makati. The fund-raising affair was sponsored by HSBC, Adidas, Metropolitan Athletic Club, Mercopan, run at Rockwell, BPI, HSBC, Volvo, Watsons, Travelan, Cream-soul, of course, Inocente.

It'll warrant for their support and to be one of the minor sponsors. I don't think all our efforts to help fund the school's Mother Rose Auditorium and also its attention schools would have been successful. I realized that there are just so many kind and generous beings still passionate about helping the country even if it seems like an uphill challenge. Gi maybe we just selected their arms too hard and abused our friendships! Either way super thanks to all of the wonderful sponsors who supported the Assumptionistas.

On top of their financial support, a sizeable few also generously gave of their time: HSBC chair Wenny Pangilinan and Inocente chair Marita Prieto (What are reasons for Cyclopedia VIP match, which joined Sunshine and cricketing Mr. P partnered with Filipino Badmintonist Olympian Wenona Lim against equally humble and endearing Mrs. I partnered with Inocente Trans player Wally Fernandez. And who were that match? Well, let's just say the Assumption did. Thanks to all!

The match, as a close one, though. Wally had to play his cards right because HSBC sponsored his trip to compete at the US Badminton Open with the rest of the Philippine Team, including our top player, Kenneth Antonelli. Practically straight from the airport, both Wally and Benjamin still played impressive during matches but felt all of us amateur players just on matter of the difference between having our leisurely lobs and their sweating 120-kph smashes.

Equally impressive was first-time player HSBC president Warner Manning. He got my award for Most Sporting CEO! he raced from match player, Warner had never touched a badminton racquet and yet he almost won with his partner, pretty Gia Baker, against my ex-tennis player buddy, Dennis, who combined with his tennis confidant. Gina also happens to be the sister of my fave costume and buddy Rhett Bonnevie, who competed as unit ground. the event in between his busy schedule. An avid player, he told me he would play to the next year's tourney.

Celebrities

What's a charity event without celebrity stars? Georgina Wilson, mommy and Dasmar Ocampo, played with all-around athlete Dean Cardenas, who brought her cute from "Sports Unlimited" as score the event. "I, Hiro" host Paolo Bediones the list as interventional video, by the way) and TV stunner and luscious columnist Gori Quicho ran the ribbon with Team Zone owner Nina Concepcion Monserrat. Inocente badminton ballet Apolo Abeto-badminton and Dan Padilla showed that their beauty and strength are unfamiliar. And cute, spunky singer Kitchie Nadal-Lorenzo sang by us.

After all the sponsored Gonzo sarkies, Adidas bags and Batman's gifts had been given to the winners, and raffle prizes from JSC and Nokia had been won, I had the Pearson Dance winners from Miriam High School perform their closing number since our own Assumption girls didn't have a dance ready.

Wow, sports, charity, generous executives, wonderful celebrity stars and just good ol' regular folks like classmates from high school —those are the best elements for a successful event that leaves everyone's hearts happy.

E-mail the author at angelicaan@inquirer.com.ph

Beyoncé: A true star

TNT TRENDS & TRENDINGS

Anton San Diego

WHEN I was informed I was going to meet and have an exclusive interview with Beyoncé and Tommy Hilfiger [for the keynote and Tatler], I thought it was an invitation too good to refuse.

Not only because it was an icon from New York City, but also because I would come face to face with one of most influential fashion's front runners and his current muse, the most celebrated pop diva of her generation. It would be a once-in-a-lifetime event.

Months before I was to leave for the interview, I told my friends about it and some even asked if they could carry my bags or shop (coz I have Beyoncé hair, such a look!) on this generation's pop-star with her bouncy, body, incredible voice and dance moves. (Who can really dance in those four-inch heels?)

Larger-than-life fame

At 23, the singer and actress has been catapulted to larger-than-life, one-name status. She has sold millions of records and performed to sold-out stadiums. She is currently working on the Austin Powers's Child album, which will have its worldwide debut in November as well as filming the much-awaited remake of "The Pink Panther" in London, with Steve Martin.

As if that's not enough, she is also busy preparing for an upcoming clothing line with her mom, and being the face of her own signature fragrance from Tommy Hilfiger called True Star.

So the brands, Tommy and Beyoncé first flew to the islands of Montego in the Caribbean, then to London and the United States. Over a hundred press people from South America, Asia and the United States were invited to the launch, which took place in an art gallery that was transformed into an all-white lounge cafe bar.

Before Beyoncé was introduced, a TV ad was played which had her singing a cappella Bryan's "Nothing on a Star." Then she walked in, re-splendent in a white tank top and long skirt, with matching major bling-blings that seemed to compete with her stellar presence. She and Tommy spoke and introduced the fragrance to a captivated audience. Afterward, they gamely mingled and partied with the crowd.

The next day was my scheduled one-on-one interview, and it was done in Tommy's head office, near Bryant Park. His office is a five-story building that works of a blend of Old World and modern elegance. I was accompanied by Sharyn Wong, Estée Lauder and La Mer's general marketing manager for Asia.

I first shook hands with Tommy. There, from the corner of my eye, I spotted her. Beyoncé was even more beautiful in person, with a charming, warm smile and a shy little girl-like demeanor. She apologized for the plane of tuna sandwich before her but since she hadn't had lunch an apology was needed. She was definitely svelte, with curves and hips would make J.Lo jealous! She was simply flawless and fun!

Power and charisma

Tommy said he decided to launch a new women's fragrance about a year ago to keep up with fashion trends, and he had Beyoncé in mind from the beginning.

"I met Beyoncé many years ago, when she was just starting out, and even then you could see deep her talents and her star quality I wanted her because for me a true star is someone with lasting power, someone who is original and with lots of star charisma. I find all of those qualities in her," he said.

True Star, the resulting scent, was personally approved by Beyoncé. She said she had 9-10 different scents and scents to choose from before she and Tommy agreed on the final product.

"The scent is really very individualistic and very sexy. What I like about it is, it's very elegant and feminine at the same time," she said.

Packaging the scent was another matter. "We wanted to take Beyoncé and really show her in a way she had not been seen before by consumers and her fans. So when we told her we wanted something more intimate and classic, she was all for it. The [red] photo shoot her just having some time for herself at home," explained Tommy.

Asked about her future plans, Beyoncé said her biggest dream is to do a big musical. "I love to dance, I love to act, and to combine both and match them with someone would be amazing."

Her last words about True Star? "I am just honored to have such an opportunity, and I love that I did it because it smells really great and I'm sure everyone will love it!"

She wants to eat 'adobo'!

After the interview, I had a chance for a photo-op with Tommy and Beyoncé. I asked her the obligatory "when are you coming to the Philippines" question. Her answer? "I am dying to go to the Philippines. I want to eat adobo!"

I was so shocked with her response! So I quickly asked her where she had heard of Philippine food.

"I have heard so much about the Philippines from my makeup artist, Molly Bassal. She is my dear friend and she talks about the Philippines so much. Everyone loves her, she is actually based" she said.

Tommy interjected, "After this, I will introduce you to her."

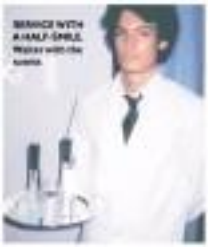
As I was leaving, Tommy whispered in my ear, "Can I speak with you?" Wow, my heart jumped and my mind raced. Was he going to ask me to model for him (some people can dream, no?), or better yet, work for him?

Next week: What Tommy Hilfiger wanted from me. And meet one of these Tatler's most sought-after makeup artists, who happens to be a Filipino!

True Star perfume, body and bath line are available at Rustan's Department Store.

THE MARTINI bar on the launch

THE AUTHOR with Sharyn Wong, Estée Lauder and La Mer's general brand manager for Asia



BEYONCÉ WITH A HALF-SMILE. Relaxed with the camera.

ALEXANDRE CHARRIOL

ENCOUNTERS

2004

The scion of the luxury watch house is in Manila to exhibit color-rich canvases

AN ENCOUNTER with artist Alexandre Charriol

MANILA MODE. Casual finds him wearing long-sleeved tee and black slacks by Calvin Klein and Ardiles basic from Charriol.

This Charriol paints

Text by Alice T. Vergara
Photos by Chito Nicino

IF THERE you can't make it to the last day of French-American painter Alexandre Charriol's exhibit at the Ayala Museum today, you can still have a chance to see the man and his works up close and personal. "Encounters," his first one-man show in Manila, will overtime to run tomorrow and Wednesday at the Gallery of the Peninsula Manila.

Answer being your cameras, ladies, as the brainy handsome artist promises to grace the opening night. For women art collectors, however, are either you are to difficulty as Charriol's paintings have been selling fast. His newfound fans have snapped up 17 of his 20 paintings barely a day after his show opened at the Ayala Museum.

The artist, who has had the chance to exhibit his works in New York, London, Sydney and Hong Kong, is amazed at the warm reception his art has been getting from Filipinos. The reason he's been enjoying so far in Manila is unprecedented.

"I'm very happy that Filipinos seem to appreciate my art and have taken it in a new level," says Charriol, 35, who cites such patrons as Bangkok, Poznan and Mexico among his influences. "They're probably fond of colors and the human."

If the success of the show is any indication, it won't take long for Charriol to find buyers for his second batch of paintings.

Either Filipinos love his art—which has been variously described as bright, colorful, energetic, humorous and intense—or they can't resist movie-lovers enough of him and his good looks.

Pedigree

Perhaps his pedigree also helps. After all, he's the son of Philippe Charriol, founder of the French luxury brand of watches, jewelry, leather goods and fashion accessories that carries the family's name.

"Maybe that helps," he smiles shyly. "A good name never hurts."

But I expect him, however, to join the family business anytime soon. Unlike most sons of prominent families, Charriol does not feel any pressure. On the contrary, his parents have given him their unreserved support in pursuing his passion for painting, which he "discovered" at the late age of 17.

"I was never into art until one day, out of boredom, I picked up some pad and color pencils and started to draw," he says. "Everything evolved from there."

He does Charriol feel the weight of living up to such an illustrious name. If anything, he says it more as an advantage, as it facilitates him to gain his very best in everything he does. It opens doors and, if he wants exposure to his exhibit is anywhere, makes other people more receptive to what he says and does.

"My family has been very supportive," he says. "They've asked me many times to join them, but they know this is what I want to do. I don't think I'll ever drop my art because I can always do both [paint and join the family business]. But right now, I want to give 100 percent of myself to my art and give myself a chance to succeed."

Older sister Coralie is one of the companies big designers and the chief publicist. Alexander helps in a limited capacity as a consultant.

"I'm not completely out of it," he says, "but they always make it a point to ask my opinions."

Although most of his views are set in stone, Charriol can't say himself designing jewelry pieces some day. He finds the medium too small, its requirements too delicate. Painting will always be his chief form of expression.

"I like to paint big," says Charriol, who studied at Ecole Boulle Museum of Fine Arts and the National School of Design. "I usually paint on canvas using mixed media, primarily acrylic and pastel."

Model

He doesn't mind occasionally posing for painters, though, something he and Coralie have been exposed to ever since they were kids. They had no choice as their mom, Annick, is a photographer. Also exhibited in modeling as a child. In fact, when he was 19 he signed up with an agency in New York to give modeling a try. It wasn't the call of fame that lured him, but the chance of earning "easy money." He never had his chance to debut on the catwalk, as he became too preoccupied with his art.

"Besides," he adds, "it's really not my field." But for Inocencio Librarbo, he didn't mind slipping into the latest clothes from Diesel, Kenneth Cole and Calvin Klein.

"Now I have a problem," he says good-naturedly as he was counsel unwisely to keep his tummy in during the shoot. "I'm open to doing other things to advance my art."

Don't be surprised if Charriol looks a little darker tomorrow compared to his picture. He recently had a brief fling in tennis—with a friend. Not a girlfriend, for the benefit of the curious and those who have been beached by the Frenchman.

"I have many girlfriends, one per block," he winks. "Kidding aside, I just got out of a two-year relationship and I'm not looking for anything serious right now."

And what will make him put down his brush and move if only temporarily?

"It won't be an easy one," he says, "as my ideal girl must be self-motivated, determined, organized, humorous, elegant and beautiful. I never set boundaries. If the chemistry is there, I guess I will tell within it."

The reason Filipinas have a likely chance of capturing Charriol's heart.

But they better be wary of what they say as the foreigner knows a smattering of Filipino. He and Coralie were partly raised by Lita Alberto, a Filipina housekeeper, as the family traveled and lived in various parts of the world.

Aside from English, he's fluent in French and understands some Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Chinese and, thanks to Alberto, Filipino.

Charriol says Filipinos are hardworking, kind and loving people who can adapt easily to change. Alberto is still with the family and lorena based in London. She lost at no interval home to speak French. The Charriol kids now live most of the time in New York.

"I speak it's languages," he beams. "I've been working on my Tagalog ever since I arrived." Don't hesitate searching him on the conversation words. Already he knows most of them by heart.

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NO TIME FOR LOVE. The artist wears an Ardiles Tuxedo watch from the Charriol collection.

SHADOW DANCING. He goes rugged in brown rag-sleeved top and jeans, both from Diesel. Teal's one-piece and Charriol Columbus ring and bangle are model's own.

UP UP AND AWAY. The artist shows off at the Ayala Museum/evangelista in olive jacket, yellow shirt and pair of jeans, all from Diesel. The black leather messenger bag is from Charriol.

ADDITED. He wears the setting sun in wing-sleeved shirt and khaki pants by Calvin Klein.

CONNECTED. He keeps in touch with family and close friends wherever he goes. Striped shirt and black slacks by Kenneth Cole

MAJOBEL Pontas

DEANNE Lyn Ocampo

AUDOA Arroyo

MADONNA Cardenas

DITE Sandico Ong

Women of the year

Text by Bawara C. Burgos
Photos by Joseph Bagcal

THEIR accomplishments reflect the powerful combination of proficiency, passion and, yes, perspiration. But, although no surprise that these women really sweat, they do it ever so gracefully.

In a recent press conference, this year's members of The Outstanding Women in the Nation's Service (TOWNS) talked briefly about their extraordinary career choices. Using their devotion and the determination required to be a successful woman in today's world.

Because of her work with sick children, Catherine Babao-Gabalda was given the Reader's Digest Everyday Hero award in 2003 and a United Nation in 2004. This TOWNS awardee for public service (children's healthcare advocacy) says trying to overcome her grief over the death of her son in 1998 when she established Migi's Corner Foundation, a non-profit organization aimed at supporting the living conditions of indigent kids in government hospitals. There are now 12 Migi's Corners all over the country.

"In addition to chief of Mc hospital, I continue to advocate for improvements to the area of children's health through stories in the magazine and by encouraging to write about such topics in the business," says Gabalda, who is also helping in the rehabilitation of the pediatrics ward of the Philippine General Hospital.

Alicia Rita Bleza-Arroyo, chair of the Philippine Stock Exchange, worked hard to make the Hotel Continental and Banking Corp. (BCBC) a leading commercial players in Hong Kong, before she became the president and CEO of BCBC bank last June.

"I relocated the Southern Sumitomo Office to the Ilila Ferry enabling OFWs to have easier access to remitting their funds to their beneficiaries. This also gave them an option to those to just remitting nationwide. Together with re-opened business partnerships, I worked on the establishment of the Hong Kong Bayanihan Trust Co. that enabled domestic helpers to make use of training facilities," says Arroyo, who received an appreciation award from the PSE in 2001 for supporting and contributing to the democratization of the PSE, and in 2004 for her "sterling leadership and dedication."

Maria Josephine Barrios' work is an admirable summon unveiled a committed personality because she has used a popular literary form to discuss issues such as censorship and violence against women and mail-order brides.

"I have effortlessly articulated the expressions and issues of women through my poetry, plays and literature novels. I believe my work has influenced and inspired other women writers, artists and musicians," says Barrios, whose recognitions have greatly contributed to women's studies and literature.

A facilitator in return to literary and poetry workshops in the Philippines and United States, Barrios countrymarked the six-week UP Intensive Philippine Studies Program, which offers courses in Filipino and Philippine Studies to Filipino-American and American Asian studies scholars from the US, Japan and other countries.

Madonna Carlos Cardenas earned an award for Outstanding Research Level 3 on the Philippine Rice Research Institute in 1999. In 1999, she received the Best Paper award at the 31st PHCP Annual Scientific Meeting. In 2003, her work titled "Population Dynamics and Growth of Weeds in Rainfed, Wet-Direct Systems in Response to Chemical and Cultural Control Methods," was awarded the best research paper.

"Born to a poor family, I have always been inspired to search for relevant technologies to alleviate low production and the income of poor families in the countryside," she says.

Cecilia Dante Dalton has been in the medical profession for 39 years now. She has received honors of the Philippine most memorable stories, like the government's negotiations with the CPP/NPA in 1986 and with the MILF in 1987, the coup against the Aquino government in 1989, the killer quake in 1990, the 80 Plaza-like eruption in 1991, the outbreak of Jose Fabig by the CPP's Alex Boncayao Brigade in 1994, and the peace talks between the Philippine government and the Muslim separatist group MILF in Tripoli, Libya, in 2001.

"I have consistently tried to uphold responsibility and commitment in an industry that is fiercely competitive and driven by energy and profit. My strong commitment to public service is my personal and humble contribution to the task of nation-building," Dalton says.

Raquel del Rosario Fuentes is the first Filipino gastroenterologist recently trained in forensic pathology and the first Filipino woman pathologist. She won The Outstanding Young Lives Award in forensic pathology in 2002.

Romeo Alfonso has forensic medicine expertise as a lone during the Ormoc disaster tragedy in 1990, the Asuncion de Jesus Filipinas Ore in 1998 and the Asian Spirit plane crash in 1999. For the autopsy of a Filipino worker killed in Sipjan, she was taken as a forensic pathology consultant by the Attorney General's office of the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas in 1997. She participated in the Physician For Human Rights Republic of Cyprus Mission in 1999 to identify victims of the Turkish invasion. In 2001-2002, she was forensics pathology consultant for the UN Transitional Administration in East Timor.

"Being a epidemiologist is the devil is a fascinating job," she explains.

Corazon Lourdes Cynthia Amalelo Gutierrez was Tino Magsaysay's Asian Heroes Award in 2003. She using her time to spread a message which ignited

CATHERINE Babao-Gabalda

CHONCHON Gonzalez

in the Philippines. "In 2004, she won the International Earth Day Award of Recognition for "Ekoli, a Collection of Philippine Lullabies." She has also organized multisectoral consultations among the different groups resulting in Bk. Barangay helping them take care of the planet's precious watersheds and forest cover.

"Whether engaged in the task of healing Mother Earth or rekindling our ties with our Motherland by echoing the voices of our ancestral past. I believe I have touched the lives and hearts of our countrymen and made them proud to be the people of the Philippines and citizens of the world," says this actress.

Wanchu Celina Lambino received the Pasugal Iloilo Kongreso ng Manobong Pilipino in 2002. In 2004, she joined the Impeachment trial of Joseph Estrada as a private prosecutor. "I particularly live on TV the presentation of bank managers and Oscar Bugsay as witness," she says.

Lambino was appointed UP Diliman chief legal officer in 1991. In 2000, she was part of the fact-finding mission to Sipadan Hostages.

Ana Camilla Matias, president of the Philippine Ergonomics Society, director of the Philippine Institute of Industrial Engineering, division head of the National Research Council of the Philippines and secretary-general of the Association for Engineering Education in Southeast Asia and the Pacific is the key founder of the Philippine Institute of Industrial Engineers.

"My involvement in various government projects has been characterized by both application of expertise and scientific in generating new knowledge that have the focus of government policy and decision-making," Matias says.

Denise Lyn Ocampo has published co-awardees for the Reading Association of the Phils., Family Studies Program of the UP College of Home Economics and UP Home Economics Journal. Her specialization in Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) covers in extensive community-based research and development experience, utilized by national and local policy reforms for the welfare of 0-6 years old Filipino children.

"I dedicate my achievements to my beloved mother and to my mentor. They are the moving power in my work," she says.

Fernandina Basilio Ong, president/designer of Carlo Apparels and president of Basilio Foundation, has pioneered and saved the finished products of the Mangyans in Mindoro. She also plans to put up a center to empower Mindoro in both locals and tourists. In 1991, she was recognized with The World's Who's Who of Women Certificate of Merit, 11th Edition, by the International Biographic Center in Cambridge, England.

Rhodora Dacuia Pagsisi, president of the Mathematical Society of the Phils., secretary of the National Research Council of the Phils and member of the Southeast Asian Mathematical Society, is a member of the Commission on Higher Education technical panel for science and math, curriculum and external programs for higher institutions.

"My efforts have always been geared toward the improvement of the mathematics community in the Philippines. This summer, I help conduct sites of improving the mathematical knowledge of teachers and students alike," she says.

Worthy of emulation

TOWNS Awards are given every three years to Filipino women professionals, 21-45 years old at the time of selection. Since TOWNS was founded in 1974 by Lions Club Int'l., it has included 120 women.

"These awardees represent the best array of phenomenal women. They continue only to devote but also to achieve success in professions where there is no room for mediocrity. They are examples to be celebrated and emulated by us all. By making performance their bottom line, they demonstrate that the most effective response to adversity is an insistence on success. Success is the best revenge," says Dr. Ofelia Sarmiento-Ocampo, chair of the awards committee.

This year's 12 TOWNS awardees will be honored on Oct. 28 at Malacañang Palace.

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ALESSELEM Raposo

ARIMA Pontes

MARIA Josephine Barrios

MARIONU Lambino

CECILIA Dalton

BAN KEE Trading popular toy items: 1. Ninja Turtle Lair Playset; 2. Winnie the Pooh's kitchen playset; 3. Cuddly SpongeBob; 4. Mickey's Fun Time Refrigerator; 5. Adorable Eeyore

MARVIE Tamula, Ban Kee Trading marketing manager, with Disney Princess Dancing Cinderella

Toy season is here

Text by Yasmin Baga-Reyes
Photos by Rojee Carpio

We are into the "ber" months, which means the toy-shopping holiday frenzy is about to begin.

The star person true during the season says and gift trade shows held by two big names in the toy industry.

Fantastic Int'l, Inc. and Ban Kee Trading Inc. staged its trade show to launch the latest imported toys, games, accessories and novelty gift items.

At the Garden Ballroom of Edsa Shangri-La hotel, guests were greeted by a myriad of stylish and exotic Ban Kee's robots, which dolls, baby divas and high-tech mini remote-controlled action figures ruled the premises.

According to Marvie Tamula, marketing, advertising and promotions manager of Ban Kee Trading Inc. (tel. 3719876), the show previewed its 2004-2005 collection of toys and accessories from the world's giant toy manufacturers and licensors.

The one-day exhibit featured an assortment of new toys that stood out for their novelty and functionality.

Easily a crowd-drawer was Go-bug (Habasic), one of the newest battle toys from Tomy. The cameo-built battle action cyber bugs came in three designs, with each design sporting two colors. It moved by flywheel, thus no need for batteries.

Another sensational new product from Hasbro was the Micronil, the latest mini remote-controlled toys that were representative of fictional ancient guardians of the earth. The toys are small enough to fit in the pocket.

Reminder Tamagochi, the lovable tiny pet from cyberspace that became a big hit with millions of kids in the late '90s? Those baby aliens from Bandai are making a big comeback in better exciting and high-tech ways.

Children could relive the Tamagochi craze with the new infrared feature of the toy, the newly acquired technology which would enable them to connect instantaneously with other Tamagochi toys. Kids could make friends, play games, exchange gifts and become their e-pets, and eventually produce "tamababies."

Another new toy explored the magical and mystical world of the occult. It introduced Wild, Kitta, Tavanee, Cornelia and Hay Lin. The young girls with distinct personalities and powers. Collectively dubbed as Witch dolls, they come all from Disney's comic book message witch characters. The 7-inch dolls are collectible items.

These new toy lines and brands will be released in the market soon with the latest items from other top-selling brands such as Bratz, Jordi, Candoo and Power Rangers.

Fantastic Barbies

Held at Club Filipino, the two-day Fantastic Int'l. trade show was attended by major toy dealers, department store and toy shop owners and marketing executives and distributors from all over the country.

There on its fantastic pens, Fantastic featured an impressive line of its specially designed products, from picture frames of different styles, colors and scenes; to toy dolls, stuffed toys, girl's hair accessories, jewelry boxes, cosmetic kits, pillows, bubble machines and colorful figurines.

It also showcased mechanical toys, action figures, hobby toys, model construction, and baby toys and products.

According to Ms Anecelet Dunyamol, president of Fantastic Int'l (tel. 471-1833 to 37), all its toys and gift collections are designed in the Philippines and manufactured in China.

But it was the all-new Barbie gifts and novelty items that were major off the shelves.

"Lucky for us, we got the exclusive license to create a whole line of Barbie's gift wall," said Dunyamol.

Among the top sellers in the Barbie collection, which is either made of wood and polystone, were Barbie's trinket boxes, mini dressers with Barbie face on top, Barbie clock and Barbie flower cluster pulls.

"Barbie has a cognitive market, and so it seems I have for us to push this to our clients," said Dunyamol.

Educational value

With all their sizzling toys, do Fantastic and Ban Kee care about their educational value and purpose?

Yes, both do.

For Fantastic and Bandeo, toys serve an important purpose. Children still find value and education from a toy or game that provides enjoyment.

"Speaking from a mother's point of view, I believe that through play and games, children will discover and practice important skills. Children learn about shapes, sounds, colors and numbers," Tamula said.

She added that with toys, children also learn how to share and get along with other children, improve their manual dexterity and eye-hand coordination.

Tamula cited the firm's Gundam model kit from Bandai. "It has well-molded kit parts that can be snapped together," she said. "The pieces are molded in appropriate colors that even impatient kids can end up with a good-looking action figure. Kids' parents can help out create the model, it can be a good bonding time at home."

The toys are safe. "When we design toys or even before ordering a certain toy, we make sure that everything is safe for the users," said Dunyamol.

For the company, a good toy should be classic, user-friendly and non-breakable. It should be large enough not to be swallowed or choked on.

"We really make it a point that our toys are free from sharp points or cutting edges or splinters that would injure the kids," Dunyamol said.

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MER Anecelet Dunyamol, president of Fantastic International, with adult-size dog plush slippers

FUNTASTIC International's over-sulking toys and gift items: 1. Dog plush shoulder bag; 2. Funny figure alarm clock for schoolkids; 3. Alarm clock for golf enthusiasts; 4. Barbie mini drawers; 5. Barbie stone-look photoframes, trinket boxes and drawers made of polystone and wood

Sunday LIFESTYLE

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ALL in the family: Mom of the bride Babydoll Aquino, Regina and Robert with Robert's parents, Lt. Col. Kevin and Jo Richards

AQUINO-RICHARDS NUPTIALS

Keeping an old vow and making a new one

By Maurice Arcache

SIX years ago, Regina Refugio Naldo Aquino, beautiful and talented stage actress, daughter of vivacious, globe-trotting Rose "Babydoll" Aquino, vice president of WorldTravel BTI in Atlanta, Georgia, vowed to marry on the same day her grandparents, the late Rep. Rafael "Pael" C. Aquino and Refugio "Puring" Aquino, made their marriage vows.

The occasion was the celebration of the golden wedding anniversary at the Manila Cathedral of her beloved "Nana" and "Nunu."

So Regina wed her tall, handsome and successful financial analyst beau, Robert Anthony Richards, son of Lt. Col. Kevin and Josephine Richards of Alexandria, Virginia, on the same day at the St. Matthews Cathedral in Washington, D.C.

Traveling pair

Despite the bride's travels—visiting her grandparents in the Philippines, studying in New York, meeting her mother in Dubai or Atlanta—home was always Washington.

Robert also did a lot of traveling, his father being in the United States military. He spent most of his life in Hawaii, a few years in Singapore then went to the mainland for college. Upon graduating, he also moved to the D.C. area.

The couple met through a mutual pal at a Halloween party in 2002. Robert's best friend in college was Regina's old high school buddy. While they noticed each other's good looks, the timing wasn't quite right then.

KEEPING/ C8

THE EXTENDED Aquino family poses with the newlyweds at the reception.

ROSE Aquino and daughter Regina at the golden wedding anniversary of their parents, Rep. Rafael and Purita Aquino, on Jan. 2, 1998

MOM of bride Rose "Babydoll" Aquino with brother-in-law Francisco "Bar" Ramos

SISTERS ACT Stunning sisters, and aunts of the bride, Ramona Aquino and Rosita Aquino-Ramos outside St. Matthew's Cathedral, Washington, DC

Keeping an old vow and making a new one

Previous page

But they bumped into each other in another party a year later. Regina was impressed by his intelligence and passion during their first real conversation. They discovered how much they had in common.

Falling madly in love, they were engaged after five months of dating.

'Where thou goest'

One evening, Robert simply said, "I want to move to New York and I want you to move with me—as my wife. Marry me!" Regina replied, "Yes!"

Deciding to wed on her grandparents' anniversary, the couple spent their eight-month engagement planning the wedding. Their wedding invitation was very personal, containing their favorite love poem, "And Now You're Mine" by Nelia Gonzales.

Regina looked for the perfect wedding gown at Isabella's, in a romantic light-encased courtyard full of layers of tulle with matching long-trained tulle cape, worn in lieu of a veil. The dress was designed by Renee Roh of Renee Roh Bridals. Bridesmaids chose an elegant vintage beaded dress from her late mom's collection of gowns designed by the late Renee Valera, in rose, pink and green.

The big antique wooden doors of St. Matthew's Cathedral in Washington happened at 2:30 p.m. for the ceremony. The matron-of-honor of the bride watched the apple of her eye walk down the aisle. Robert was dashing in his 24-karaat seamless suit. He had a gold pocket watch given by his father, as well as gold and jade cufflinks that belonged to Regina's "Nana" Rafael Aquino.

NEWLYWEDS Regina and Robert with principal sponsors: uncle Francisco Ramos, aunts Carol Aquino, Nelia Lee, Kathleen Fenelon, Aracia Bonilla and uncle Paul Lobis

All in the family

The couple asked family and friends to join the bridal entourage. Regina's close pal, actor and singer-songwriter Cynthia Liu, was maid of honor. Bridesmaids, assuming to long-back gowns and tresses tulle capes, were cousins and graduates-to-be from three universities. They were cousins Christine "Chit" Jean-Javier, Charlene Aquino, Rainbow Ramos, Kristin Ramos, International School Manila 2004 graduate Samantha Lee and fellow actor Veronica del Carmen.

Junior bridesmaid Samantha Lee and flower girls, nieces Hannah Roehrl and Julia Fenelon, also wore matron capes and looked like little babies.

Best man was Dominic Bonilla, who introduced the couple. Groomsmen were said big brothers, Anthony and Christopher Richards and close friends from college. Coin and ring bearers were nephews Michael Lobis and Jackson Fenelon; flordecorist was Cheris Mack-Arnes.

Principal sponsors were all aunts and uncles, such as tita Nelia Lee, Carol Lim Duprees, Aracia Bonilla and Kathleen Fenelon and also Ellie Ramos, Paul Lobis.

Reception was at the newly refurbished elegant and stately Madison Hotel in Washington, D.C., where 170 people feasted on fusion cuisine, blending East and West with "Pan-asian," "Mediterranean" and "Western" food stations. A rustic chef was flown from Mid South, the best in town.

THE GRAND master-in, Refugio "Puring" Aquino, in the early '60s in one of her Ramon Valera gowns

'Flowers' from Manila

The wedding cake was a stainless four-tiered frangipani cake adorned with triple chocolate mousse and favorite fruit pastry. It was topped with beautifully handcrafted gum-paste calla lilies from Manila, made especially by aunt Bing Aquino-Aquino, owner of Perfect match Flowers. A "dessert lounge" was filled with over 30 different delectable, chocolate-truffle tarrens, from all over the world. An old-fashioned ice cream parlor was a testament to Regina's love for ice cream.

Too visible at the event were Regina's indelible mark, Rowena N. Aquino, who lovingly in from Manila, accompanied by her newlywed daughter, Chit Jean-Javier, and her Irish hubby Justin Javier, who joined in from Donegal, Ireland.

Another aunt, balloons dancing queen, Benita Aquino-Ramos, gave a beautiful rendition of "Until I'm Yet" with her award-winning intonation to the delight of the couple and their guests.

As the reception, super chic emcee Babydoll changed into another hand-beaded vintage gown by Ramon Valera, also from her late mom Puring's collection. All emcees looked fabulous! Robert's large Italian and Celtic family came from all over the US to salute the occasion.

Entertainment was a mixture of live and recorded music. Everyone rocked on the dance floor, led by the bride and groom until almost daylight. Giddings, where the newlyweds finally retired to their Royal Suite. The couple's adorable pug, Presley greeting a few in, partied as well.

Everyone agreed the blending of Regina's Filipino and Robert's Italian-Celtic-valuera promises a great partnership and future indeed!

Lipa street gets a new name

PURELY PERSONAL

Josephine Barcarse

front of St. Therese...to age 89.

BALIPULARO Street in Lipa, Batangas, has been renamed Obispo Olivar in honor of the first Filipino priest and bishop of the city. The new name stands for the Congregation for the Cause of Saints in Rome—Servant of God Bishop Alfredo Maria Amancio Olivar.

Attending the ceremonies were Lipa Mayor Vilma Santos-Recto, Lipa Archbishop Ramon Arguelles, Msgr. Olivar Lay Organization president Danny Dolor, priests and municipal councilors who passed Special Ordinance No. 03-2004 with former vice mayor Fernando Manjares presiding.

Sponsors of the ordinance were Councilors Roberto C. Sandicho-Africa, Romy Macasaet and Leonila L. Gaspar. They were supported by Councilors Ire B. Africa and Edmundo L. de Jesus.

The street renaming in August was part of the celebration of Lipa City's 375th founding anniversary.

A good priest. Danny Dolor, who is helping in the information campaign on the late bishop, said he was a good priest, a holy priest. Danny got to know the bishop when he was auxiliary bishop of Lipa in 1984 and became his confessor at the pharmacy of Danny's mother, Soledad Lirio Dolor, now 91.

Doña Soledad was actually the sponsor of Bishop Olivar when he was installed auxiliary bishop. She donated in 1979 the statue of the bishop that is now in the garden of the convent of the Missionary Catechists of St. Therese of the Child Jesus, which he founded in 1958. The bishop passed away on Oct. 1, 1978, 25 years ago.

Bishop Olivar. Danny Dolor's book, "Lipa," mentions an interview in 1991 with the late Bishop Godofredo Pedernal, a young priest during the Virgin's appearance in St. Therese Catechist, then a postulant.

Father Pedernal accompanied then Lipa Bishop Alfredo Maraon to the Carmelite convent. The bishop was angry because of the nuns' claims of visions. It was said a flow of rose petals met the bishop when he opened the convent's door. He fell to his knees, accepting the miracle was true.

But it had to be kept a secret. Some 56 years later, the appari-tion has still to be recognized by the Philippine Church.

Not people go to Lipa to hear Mass and pray to Our Lady Mediatrix of All Graces. Bishop Pedernal passed away several months after the interview and, on his request, was buried beside Bishop Olivar in Tayabas, Quezon.

More on Bishop Olivar

Most Rev. Alfredo Maria Amancio Olivar was born in 1899 in Mauban in Lipa, Lipa City, Batangas, to Teodoro Olivar and Florentina Catalina Avendaño.

His early religious formation and education were at the Jesuit College of St. Francis Xavier in Manila. After earning a degree in Bachelor of Arts at Ateneo de Manila University, he went to the University of Sto. Tomas Pontifical Seminary for Theological Studies.

The bishop was ordained in 1919. His pastoral ministry began that same year as parish priest of Tayabas, Quezon. He was appointed the rector of the Cathedral Parish in Lipa City 1927-1931.

He established catechetical centers in both parishes. He also became vicar general of the archdiocese of Lipa. After 11 years in the ministry, Father Olivar was ordained to the Episcopate and became Lipa's first installed bishop.

FR. Jonas Palmares, Fr. Eyong Ramos, Mother Mary Mabolis, Archbishop Arguelles, Mayor Vilma Santos-Recto, Danny Dolor, MCST Mother General Felina Ciapitis, Fr. Bong Lutero and former vice mayor Fernando Maguera

In 1951, Bishop Olivar was installed as apostolic administrator of the new diocese of Lucena when he founded the Missionary Catechists of St. Therese in 1958.

In 1969, Bishop Olivar was declared first residential bishop of the diocese of Lucena.

The cause of Bishop Olivar's beatification has led to efforts in his home province, Batangas, and hometown, Lipa, to propagate his life and work especially among Senegambia. Former Lipa Archbishop Gaudencio Rosales organized the Alfredo Olivar Movement composed of Batangueño priests, religious brethren and sisters, relatives of Bishop Olivar and the Batangas laity.

Seminary needs help

Fr. Oscar Cadapan, rector of Pope Paul VI minor seminary in Mauao, Legaspi, wrote:

"Our minor seminary opened after Pope Paul VI, is now 34 years old. It needs some repair and repainting... Our Diocesan chancery provides for 1/2 one of the present provisions in the Philippines.

"May I ask you for financial [assistance] for the repainting of the seminary dormitories and the pine/chapel ceiling. Also [for the] seminary chapel and study hall..."

Write to Father Oscar at the above address, call (052) 481-1650 or e-mail oscardiocese@yahoo.com.

Readers needs help. Sergio Geukha, whom daughter Mia Sy wants to become a nurse, can be reached at 0205754 or, by text, 0919-5146988. Sheila is a first-year nursing student at Adamson University.